

A Contemporary Voice for the Female Protagonist:

*An exploration of the collaborative creative process;
the development and synthesis of vocal techniques
in the realisation of premiere music performances*

Anikó M TÓTH

Performance Portfolio &
Critical Commentary

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	PAGE
Contents	iii
List of Performance Works with Roles	viii
Acknowledgements	ix
Abstract	x
1. Introduction	1
2. Literature Review	6
3. Methodology	29
3.1. Embodiment of the Female Protagonist	29
3.2. Vocal Techniques in the Portfolio	30
3.3. Notation and the Score as Collaborative Tool	32
3.4. Methodology 1: Finished Pieces - Performance and Interpretation	33
3.5. Methodology 2: Pieces Written for the Performer	34
3.6. Methodology 3: Fully-Collaborative Pieces	35
4. Case Studies	38
4.1. Two Hungarian Singers	38
4.1.1. Márta Sebestyén	38
4.1.2. Beatrix Tárnoki	39
4.2. Cathy Berberian and Luciano Berio's collaboration	40
4.3. Taylor Wilson	42
4.4. Nadine Benjamin (formerly Mortimer-Smith)	50
4.5. Vocalist-Composers	52
4.5.1. Diamanda Galás	52
4.5.2. Joan La Barbara	54
4.5.3. Meredith Monk	56

5. <i>Green Angel</i> : opera	60
5.1. Overview	60
5.2. Research Context	62
5.2.1. Vocal Qualities, Techniques and Musical Collaboration via Notation and Rehearsal Discussion	63
5.2.2. Collaborative Character Creation in Rehearsal (Movement)	71
5.2.3. Challenges and Solutions during the Collaborative Process	73
5.2.3.1. General	73
5.2.3.2. Vocal Considerations	73
5.3. Conclusion	75
6. <i>Flight Paths</i> : A chamber opera	76
6.1. Overview	76
6.2. Collaborative Creation of Character – <i>Linda</i>	78
6.2.1. Acting, Costume and Dance	78
6.2.2. Vocal Characterisation using re-contextualised techniques	84
6.3. Embodying the Female in Performance – <i>Ilona</i>	85
6.3.1. Acting, Costume and Dance/ Movement	85
6.3.2. Ilona's Music	89
6.4. Further Collaboration	96
6.5. Conclusion	99
7. <i>The Night Bride</i> : A Music Theatre Piece for Soprano, Cimbalom and Fixed-Medium	100
7.1. Abstract	100
7.2. Overview	100
7.3. Research Context	101

7.3.1. Female Protagonist, Themes	101
7.3.2. Collaborative Creation of Anna	107
7.3.2.1. Music	107
7.3.2.2. Word Settings	111
7.3.2.3. Hungarian Text Translation and Vocal Treatment (Fixed Medium)	114
7.3.2.4. Voiceover Characters, Vocal Qualities (Fixed Medium)	115
7.3.2.5. Acting, Costume and Dance – <i>Anna</i>	117
7.3.2.6. Performance Preparation – Challenges and Solutions	122
7.4. Output and Conclusion	123
8. <i>ELEGEIA</i> (for Anna) for electroacoustic tape and live vocals	124
8.1. Overview	124
8.2. Research Context	125
8.2.1. A Quest for Emotional Expression	125
8.2.2. Contextual Background: Music, Media and Repertoire	127
8.3. Method of Collaboration, The Evolving Score as Collaborative Tool	131
8.4. Vocal Techniques and Considerations	140
8.5. The Female Protagonist Voiced and Embodied	141
8.6. Output and Conclusion	146
9. <i>to the wider ocean</i> : for voice, piano trio and video	147
9.1. Overview	147
9.2. Research Context	147
9.2.1. The Collaborative Process From a Distance	147
9.2.1.1. Development of Video Works	152
9.2.2. The Importance of Creating New, Female-Themed Works	154
9.3. Output and Conclusion – The Female Protagonist's Voice	156

10. <i>Mary, Polly, Sukey, Jack and Jill</i>	157
10.1. Research Context	157
10.1.1. Collaboration	157
10.1.2. Co-Creating Female Archetypes (Voice and Body)	158
10.2. Performance Preparation and Evaluation	177
10.3. Output and Conclusion	178
11. Conclusion	179
12. Appendices	181
12.1. Appendix 1. Audio/Video (USB)	181
12.2. Appendix 2. <i>Mirrors</i> score, excerpt	183
12.3. Appendix 3. <i>Vocalise/Vocal Wheeze</i> score	184
12.4. Appendix 4. 'Skotóseme' vocals breakdown	187
12.5. Appendix 5. 'ShadowSong' breakdown	188
12.6. Appendix 6. <i>Green Angel</i> DVD cover	189
12.7. Appendix 7. <i>Green Angel</i> programme	190
12.8. Appendix 8. Synopsis of <i>Green Angel</i> plot	192
12.9. Appendix 9. <i>Flight Paths</i> programme	193
12.10. Appendix 10. Character descriptions – <i>Ilona</i>	195
12.11. Appendix 11. <i>The Night Bride</i> programme notes	196
12.12. Appendix 12. <i>The Night Bride</i> score 1, excerpt	197
12.13. Appendix 13. <i>The Night Bride</i> comic, excerpt	199
12.14. Appendix 14. <i>ELEGEIA</i> Evolving Score	200
12.14.1. <i>Extended Sounds</i>	200
12.14.2. <i>Anikó Test 1</i>	201
12.14.3. Recording directions and notes	202
12.14.4. <i>Rough Scenes</i> written notes	203

12.14.5.	Score 1, September 2012	204
12.14.6.	Score 1 with notes for new recording, March 2013	206
12.14.7.	Rehearsal notes, Stavropoulos, March 2013	211
12.14.8.	Score 3, June-July 2013, with new key	212
12.14.9.	Final Score, June 2014, for ICMC, Athens, Greece	221
12.15.	Appendix 15. <i>ELEGEIA</i> programme	231
12.16.	Appendix 16. <i>to the wider ocean</i> programme, premiere	232
12.17.	Appendix 17. <i>to the wider ocean</i> song/video final order, 2015	235
12.18.	Appendix 18. <i>to the wider ocean</i> song/video final order, 2014	236
12.19.	Appendix 19. <i>to the wider ocean</i> programme, workshop	237
12.20.	Appendix 20. Interview with C McCombe, transcript	238
12.21.	Appendix 21. <i>Mary, Polly, Sukey, Jack and Jill</i> programme	242
13.	Bibliography	244
14.	Glossary of Vocal Terms	260
15.	List of Figures	271
16.	List of Images	274

List of Performance Works with Roles

1. *Green Angel*: opera
 - Ash / Green (soprano / dancer-choreographer)
2. *Flight Paths*: A chamber opera
 - Ilona (soprano / dancer-choreographer)
 - Linda (soprano / belter / dancer-choreographer)
 - Chorus (soprano)
 - Collaborator
3. *The Night Bride*: A Music Theatre Piece for Soprano, Cimbalom and Fixed-Media
 - Anna (soprano / dancer-choreographer)
 - Brides / Narrator (voiceover)
 - Collaborator
4. *ELEGEIA* (for Anna) for electroacoustic tape and live vocals
 - Mourner (soprano, extended vocals)
 - Co-Composer / Collaborator
5. *to the wider ocean*: for voice, piano trio and video
 - Soprano
 - Collaborator
6. *Mary, Polly, Sukie, Jack and Jill*
 - Little Bo Peep (soprano)

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Abstract

It is vital to increase the body of work where the female character acts as protagonist, rather than the foil for the masculine "norm" (McClary 1991).

It is the intention of this candidature to present performances of several new music works that focus on the experience of the female character and voice through the synthesis of contemporary vocal and folk music practice, as well as the embodiment of the female protagonist on stage.

The core of the presented thesis consists of a portfolio of a number of contrasting works that feature the female protagonist exploring her experience in their own way; themes include vocalised emotion, the presentation of the female body and character, gender stereotypes and archetypes, as well as roles, relationships and power. It researches a variety of collaborative composer/librettist/performer methodologies for the development of fully-human female characters onstage, which make use of a range of acting, dance and voice qualities. These vocal qualities and techniques are developed, hybridised and re-contextualised from a broad range of styles to include Classical / Contemporary, chest/Folk-style singing / vocalisations (Greek *Amannes* and *Miroloi* and Hungarian folk singing), and build upon Extended Vocal Techniques developed by various practitioners. The project draws upon fifteen years of experience as a professional singer-actor-dancer performing in a wealth of exciting projects as commissioner and collaborator using a wide range of vocal styles from Opera, Contemporary Classical, to Folk, Jazz and other Popular styles.

My vision, with musical, textual, and performative input, guides collaborators in a joint exploration; stimuli include a variety of musical forms / structures, vocal techniques and textual treatment of themes, as well as visual stimuli and performance elements, like costume, set, and properties. The portfolio also includes existing works that are collaborative in the rehearsal process, with varying degrees of input from collaborators. The work takes the perspective of the performer as co-creator of on-stage female characters, using libretto, music and my own responses to theatrical elements. The creation on stage of a female protagonist must involve the personal emotional connection of the performer.

Chapter 1. Introduction

As a cultural hybrid having grown up in Los Angeles, California with a strong Hungarian heritage of language, music, and cultural practices, I have always been interested in the juxtaposition of cultures, colours, foods, etc. Being ‘different’ was a part of my identity from childhood, and I learnt about adaptability to a variety of cultures when living in France for a period of two months as a university student, in Hungary as a postgrad and finally in the United Kingdom, where I have settled and continued my academic and performance career. Mirrored in this mélange of cultures is my interest in a mix of musical styles and techniques.

My vocal history begins with Hungarian choral and folk singing in the Kodály and Bartók tradition, to include chest folk singing accompanying Hungarian folk dance as a teenager. Music was part of a Hungarian cultural heritage my parents sought to instill in my siblings and me, and I performed Hungarian folk songs with my sister within the diaspora in the Los Angeles area. While at University, where I began my Classical vocal training, I was also introduced to a wider frame of expression in theatre and dance. Not satisfied with simple classical singing, I began studies in acting and contemporary dance, feeling I had more to express and needing more ways to do so. In my quest for personal self-expression were planted the seeds of new music theatre as an all-encompassing medium, which exploration began with my piece *Woman on a Box*, to which I will refer later. My quest led me from California to the hallowed halls of Budapest, Hungary’s Franz Liszt Academy. As my Classical vocal studies progressed at the Academy, I was also drawn into the dance world of the Trafó Artist’s House, Budapest, where I auditioned and was accepted for a performance of Meredith Monk’s *A Celebration Service*, workshopping with Monk’s original ensemble member Tom Bogdan, with dance choreographer Allison Easter, and with Monk herself in final rehearsals and performances on Bartók Rádió (2003). Working on this highly rhythmic vocal / movement / ritual dance-music-theatre piece (Monk’s work has always been difficult to categorise¹), opened my mind to a new type of vocal-musical expression that seemed to follow on from my creation of *Woman on a Box*, which could be called music theatre, performance art, or dance-

¹ Broyles (2004), p. 326, 330.

theatre. Looking to expand my expressive range further, I began to explore Jazz technique and performance, as well as expanding into Musical Theatre (for which my Classical training has been adaptable). Finally, experience with pop technique² has further expanded my range and depth of tone in my Classical singing, as I have found each newly acquired style has offered an expanded set of sound colours with which to 'paint' new 'mixed media' (hybridised) musical works and characters.

My exploration of Extended Vocal Techniques (EVT)³ began as a child, when I was exposed to the harmonics singing⁴ of nomadic peoples, such as from the Mongolian and Tuvan cultures. (Many Hungarians, such as my parents, claim a common cultural heritage with these peoples due to their nomadic origin and the Ural-Altaic origins of the Hungarian language.) These harmonics singers vocalised a fundamental tone, which was filtered with the tongue position (as well as vowel shapes and epiglottis position) to bring out 'whistling' tone melodies using the harmonic series of the fundamental note. Upon reading *National Geographic Magazine*, which gave an overview of the techniques,⁵ I began experimenting from a young age. I rediscovered my love for the sound when listening to *Genghis Blues*,⁶ an album soundtrack which features musical-cultural hybridisation of blues and Tuvan throat singing by American-Brazilian blues singer Paul Pena and Mongolian throat singing sensation Kongar-ol Ondar; I looked to create works using this technique. During my postgraduate in Manchester, UK in 2008 I began the creation of *'Vocalise/Vocal Wheeze'*⁷ as an exploration of graphic notation of extended vocal techniques to include harmonics singing, ingressive and egressive breaths, laughter and vocal fry⁸, which I developed further for a 2012 performance during the Salford Sonic Fusion Festival. I also collaborated with composer Stephen Kilpatrick on the recording of his electroacoustic piece *Feltámadni épp olyan nehéz*⁹ (*Resurrection is*

² See Glossary.

³ See Glossary.

⁴ See Glossary.

⁵ The reference to this historical issue of the magazine has been lost. An overview of some techniques can be seen in Pegg (1992), p. 49-50. I learnt and have experimented with the first technique, of changing the buccal cavity using the tongue against the hard palate to filter overtones / harmonics from a low fundamental sung tone (p. 49). Pioneer of EVTs, Deborah Kavasch of the San Diego Extended Vocal Techniques Ensemble (EVTE) calls this harmonics singing. Kavasch (1980) no pagination.

⁶ Ondar, Kongar-ol and Paul Pena (2000) *Genghis Blues*. [CD] Six Degrees.

⁷ See **Appendix 3**. for score.

⁸ As defined by Kavasch (1980), no pagination. See Glossary for definitions of terms.

⁹ Kilpatrick (2013).

*just as difficult*¹⁰, a Lazarus reference by Hungarian poet Ágnes Nemes-Nagy), which made use of my most commonly-used extended technique of harmonics singing, along with *glissandi* through my entire vocal range in Classical tone. These explorations further piqued my interest in deeper exploration and mixing of a variety of techniques, which led notably to the development of *ELEGEIA* (for Anna), a collaborative piece composed with Nikos Stavropoulos that appears in this portfolio. The piece was developed using my improvisations on extended vocal techniques, a strand that I will discuss in my commentary, and the graphic notation I had begun to explore in *Vocalise/Vocal Wheeze* played a key role in the collaborative process, initially using transcription of the aural material as memory aid which then served as a compositional and collaborative tool, which I will also discuss.

During the Salford Sonic Fusion Festival of 2012, I continued¹¹ my performance collaboration with composer-saxophonist Jan¹² Kopinski and his Reflektor Band, creating a new interpretation of his Folk-Jazz fusion audio-visual piece *Mirrors* (2005) using a range of vocal techniques. For example, 'Folk House' and 'River' called for a breathy, straight tone to give an ethereal quality, created by the group's original singing collaborator/performer Natalie Pappenheim; in rehearsals and through performances, I developed and personalised the material using Hungarian folk-like turns and embellishments at ends of phrases. In 'Palace of Culture', which was largely improvised within a loose structure cued by the bandleader as in Jazz, Jan encouraged me to bring in my operatic vocal sound using expansive vibrato, intermingled with Extended vocal techniques, such as the vocal fry and the harmonics singing I was exploring at the time.

Previous work of mine has tackled female themes. I can again mention my original dance-performance art-music theatre piece *Woman on a Box* (2001/2005), which explores the conundrum of 'fitting into the image of Feminine perfection' versus living as a fully-human person (who happens to be female). The context of the piece draws heavily upon my Catholic upbringing, which revered the Virgin Mary as the perfect image of the Feminine Ideal who gives birth without sex and who feels only

¹⁰ Could also be translated, perhaps more poetically, rather than literally, as 'weighty' or 'heavy'.

¹¹ Previous performances of *Mirrors* include Derby Jazz Festival (2010), The Sage @ Gateshead (2010) and a later performance was at Nottingham Contemporary, (2012).

¹² Pronounced "Yahn" (or ja:n in International Alphabet).

forgiveness. The embodiment of this ideal surrounded me in the form of ceramic statues in church, which contrasted with my fleshy imperfection, my inability to create life without sex, and the incredible range of emotions I felt: anger, frustration, sorrow, joy, love, pain. This inability to attain this Feminine Ideal is the context for the piece, which opens with me on a plinth dressed, seemingly, as a statue of the Virgin Mary¹³ in white veils against a pale blue background. I begin to hum Gounod/Bach's 'Ave Maria' (Hail, Mary), which is hopefully recognisable to the audience, further establishing a connection with the saint. As I begin to sing 'Ave Maria' with text, I change the words to "...statues are perfect;/ Gee, I wish that I were just like them! / I would not feel angry/ I would never get horny / Flabbiness would never get me / Frozen, frozen in perfection I'd be." Then, I proceed to throw off the mantle of the robes, which become fabrics that I vehemently dance with, shaking and moving them as if to 'shake off the yoke' of these expectations, which seem to work – as they certainly felt to me growing up in the Catholic tradition and as a woman in modern society – to maintain and propagate the Feminine ideal of being seen and not heard (like a statue is), remaining virginal (even though Mary was the mother of Jesus) and not sexual in any way, maintaining a perfect figure, having no agency or chance to move or act in life (to seek growth, adventure, *to quest!*), to make mistakes (further personal taboo due to familial abhorrence of 'doing it wrong'). What is left is a female human being disrobed on top of a plinth, body forced back into the supplicating, knee-bent position of the original statue, singing, "Oh, I beg you, somebody / Somebody come and get me off this box! / Amen".¹⁴

Davis (1997) in *Embodied Practices: Feminist Perspectives on the Body* highlights the way the female body has been perceived historically (in this case in science), which sums up the sentiments and ideas explored in *Woman on a Box*. She references Susan Bordo's (1993) *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body* in saying that the "mind-body dualism [that] has permeated Western thought, dividing human experience into a bodily and a spiritual realm". She continues:

¹³ Statues of Mary abound in churches, usually wearing white and pale blue veils and robes, with hands together in prayer or open as if welcoming a child. I worked to get the single knee-bent position, the soulful, heaven-ward eyes, and the slightly smiling, supplicant facial expression of these statues.

¹⁴ See **Appendix 1. Video 1.** for *Woman on a Box*.

The female body becomes a metaphor for the corporeal pole of this dualism, representing nature, emotionality, irrationality and sensuality. Images of the dangerous, appetitive female body, ruled precariously by her emotions, stand in contrast to the masterful, masculine will, the locus of social power, rationality and self-control. The female body is always the 'other': mysterious, unruly, threatening to erupt and challenge the patriarchal order through "distraction from knowledge, seduction away from God, capitulation to sexual desire, violence or aggression, failure of will, even death" (Bordo, 1993: 5).¹⁵

This idea is relevant in relation to Susan McClary's analysis of the musical establishment and portrayal of female opera characters, such as Carmen (Bizet), which I will discuss in the Literature Review. Davis references Keller (1985) in a sentiment similar to the main point of *Woman on a Box*, saying, "In short, the female body represented all that needed to be tamed and controlled by the (dis)embodied, objective, male scientist".¹⁶ In the case of *Woman on a Box*, "scientist" can be changed to "priest", for example, or even "media".

Feedback from my Green Room (Manchester, UK) performance included several comments on my body, for which the piece indeed calls. Some were compliments on my figure. Sadly, I am not so advanced or courageous not to have considered this. Knowing I would be shown in my underwear in front of an audience had me dieting for two weeks previous to the performance. As Susan Bordo, in her 1993/2003 book *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body*, says:

Through the pursuit of an ever-changing, homogenizing, elusive ideal of femininity... female bodies become docile bodies... whose forces and energies are habituated to external regulation, subjection, transformation, and "improvement". Through the exacting and normalizing disciplines of diet, makeup and dress... we [women] are rendered less socially oriented and more... focused on self-modification.¹⁷

There was also a comment that I should have been completely naked, rather than 'copping out' by finishing in my underwear. This had been, however, an issue I had considered carefully. The main point of the piece was that I was shown as fully-human and vulnerable, for the portrayal of which I concluded underwear-wearing to

¹⁵ Davis (1997), p. 5.

¹⁶ Keller (1986) in Davis (1997), p. 5.

¹⁷ Bordo (1993/2003), p. 166.

be sufficiently effective in my protest against this “external regulation” and “subjection” about which Bordo speaks.

Finally, regarding collaboration, I have always been interested in the conversation of creation and have enjoyed creating new works. Even solo piece *Woman on a Box* was developed with extensive feedback from colleagues and mentors helping to shape the clarity of my message. If we look at collaborators as each having a range of frames of (‘cultural’) reference, we are creating new cultural hybrids in each new work. Being an inquisitive, opinionated person, I have been interested in being able to shape new works that explored themes relevant to me and to the musical-performative world at large, highlighting and delving deeply into women’s emotional and social experience. From this frame of reference, a quest for greater personal self-expression through the voice and body, as well as interesting new music theatre works that use my range of skills to embody myself and fully-human characters on stage, I began the enquiry that encompasses this portfolio of performance works. This is my context for this exploration of embodiment of the female - firstly, in my personal quest of truly embodying myself and communicating and expressing myself as an emotional, imperfect being, and secondly on stage to present real, honest and emotive humanity embodied in my female self, rather than a stereotype or a male construct.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

My portfolio is informed by the following strands of thought: feminist theory in the portrayal of women in music theatre/opera, which includes looking at ‘hysterical’ female characters in contrast with the element of quest and strong embodiment in female characters, leading to a definition of the female protagonist. I also explored performance and characterisation with regard to the voice and body, which led me to collaborative methods in music theatre/ opera, as well as other art forms. This led also to an enquiry into attribution and authorship in performed and recorded works.

When Carter and Steiner (2004) define feminism in their glossary, they open up a discourse that can be applied to performance:

feminism A political philosophy and social-political movement. In some sense it is marked by an emancipatory concern to explain and overcome subordination and oppression of all kinds; it takes gender as a fundamental mechanism by which the world is structured.¹⁸

Oppression can take the form of removing a human being's ability to express herself emotionally. By limiting understanding of her range of human emotions through the imposition of stereotypes, creators of stage works can put women 'in a box' (or 'on a box'). By portraying women on the opera / music theatre stage as power-hungry (*Elektra*,¹⁹ *Salome*²⁰), hysterical (Woman in *Erwartung*),²¹ mentally ill (Woman in *Erwartung*, Miss Donnithorne in *Miss Donnithorne's Maggot*),²² or overly independent (*Carmen*,²³ *Lulu*²⁴), male composers/librettists limit the type of expression of their female characters to the highly dramatic and overly-emotional, showing them as dangerous and uncontrolled/able.

This is a topic Susan McClary illuminates in her 1991/1996 *Feminine Endings*, which criticises the musical establishment in its portrayal of women. This seminal work, while itself heavily criticised, is essential reading for its initial feminist analysis of music from the perspective of gender and sexuality. McClary asserts that traditional musicology does not engage with the affective and signification (meaning) aspects of music, these aspects being deemed "off limits to those engaged in legitimate scholarship".²⁵ She goes on to highlight the "violence, misogyny and racism" with which music is stained, despite its structured beauty; to McClary, music "betrays fear of women,... of the body".²⁶ A feminist reading is crucial for music in the field of musicology, which she believes, at the time of writing, has "managed miraculously to pass directly from pre- to post-feminism without ever having to change – or even examine – its ways".²⁷ She highlights the treatment of Carmen in Bizet's eponymous opera as a man-made construct embodying male fear of this 'oriental other', which must be purged through death, as well as the way 'madness' is treated in *Lucia di*

¹⁸ Carter and Steiner (2004), p. 347.

¹⁹ Strauss (1909).

²⁰ Strauss (1905).

²¹ Schoenberg (1916).

²² Maxwell-Davies (1974).

²³ Bizet (1875).

²⁴ Berg (1935).

²⁵ McClary (1991), p. 4.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

Lammermoor, etc. The element of 'hysteria' in female characters, especially in traditional opera appear here, which I will address later.

McClary looks at the way gender stereotypes and conventions were created and strengthened in the way male and female characters have (had) been represented in opera since the 1600s.²⁸ She also shines a light on the highly gendered aspects of traditional music theory, whose very use of "feminine" and "masculine" in reference to cadences, triads and even tonality (narrative section) implies that masculine is normal, while feminine is 'other' or 'abnormal' in some way.²⁹ Further, in terms of narrative, McClary cites Teresa de Lauretis, who further asserts that the Western hero is always male, the subject, the human being, whereas the female is simply the other, the obstacle, the element or foil or even a plot device, immutable, unchangeable and certainly not human. This is an element which I will address in relevant works, such as *The Night Bride*, which actively subverts this female to male relation in its narrative, as the audience only sees the perspective of its female protagonist.

In Jann Pasler's 1992 response to *Feminine Endings*, she discusses a few of McClary's arguments, pointing out that the book asks more questions than it answers, of which she finds the most fascinating:

Why have male composers and theorists often associated the feminine with the exotic Other, madness, and excess, as opposed to reason? Who is speaking through women characters? Do they shed light on 'who women really are' or are they instead 'male fantasies of transgression dressed up as woman'...?³⁰

Pasler also relates to McClary's intuitive openness to the possible meanings of the works she analyses, "rather than rationally predetermining what approach is best" and the way McClary trusts her own reactions, "not denying her subjectivity, her own social construction, nor that of music." She concludes that this approach may have an element of the feminine perhaps because she herself takes a similar approach,

²⁸ McClary (1991), p.8.

²⁹ McClary (1991), pp.9-12.

³⁰ Pasler (1992), p. 203 (p. 3 online).

much to the “puzzlement” of her male colleagues and students.³¹ Further, she asserts that, while *Feminine Endings* discusses mainly power and desire from the gender perspective, she does not address what Pasler calls “other feminine attributes – sociability, domesticity, and community”. McClary “valorizes the public and the social implications of the analysis”, but Pasler wants more from the “private and personal domain”. She suggests *Feminine Beginnings* as an alternative title, as the book is only a beginning.³² Each portfolio work attempts to respond to Pasler’s (and McClary’s) call for more works that “shed light on ‘who women really are’”, which I will discuss with reference to what I call the fully-human female protagonist, who has agency in her life and who is depicted in the staged works as having a journey, a clear character arc and who is on a quest for self-expression.

In critiquing women’s ‘self-expression’ in opera/music theatre, I highlighted the use of ‘hysteria’ as limited, not taking into account women’s full range of emotion (and vocal performers’ physical and vocal expression). I looked for a frame of reference for my use of the term. The Oxford Dictionary (online) gives two definitions for *hysteria*, the first being “exaggerated or uncontrollable emotion or excitement”, citing synonyms to include “frenzy”, “irrationality”, “panic”, “fit of madness”, “mania”, and “mental distress”. The other is “an old-fashioned term for a psychological disorder characterized by conversion of psychological stress into physical symptoms (somatization) or a change in self-awareness (such as... selective amnesia)”.³³ Notably, there is no mention of the gendered etymology of the term, which connected it with women, *per se*. Indeed, historically, the term ‘hysteria’ was used to describe, under a blanket term, a range of amorphous (or undiagnosed) maladies in women. The attribution of illness was to the womb, in Greek *hystero*.³⁴ As Germaine Greer says in her 1971 feminist polemic *The Female Eunuch*:

Some doctors really believed that... ‘the womb is a part of every illness of the female sex’. Women were assumed to be by nature subject to the tyranny of the insatiate womb, and to suffer symptoms from which men only suffered if they indulged in excessive self-abuse. [footnote, p. 376: The bibliography of hysteria is enormous... British Museum T.559 contains thirty-odd tracts dating between

³¹ Pasler (1992), p. 204.

³² Pasler (1992), p. 205.

³³ ‘hysteria’. oxforddictionary.com

³⁴ Schutzman (1999), p. 2.

1668 and 1796 which may serve as examples of the way heterogeneous symptoms were lumped together under the blanket of hysteria].³⁵

Greer pinpoints the true cause of a 'diagnosis' of hysteria (or the wandering womb): "Women were too weak, too vulnerable to irrational influences to be allowed to control their own lives".³⁶ Indeed, into the nineteenth century, where Freud was developing his theories on hysteria in the women he 'treated', (e.g. 'Anna O.', or Berthe Pappenheim), he failed to see the social aspect of the reasons for women's 'hysterical' symptoms, which Bordo (1993) underlines:

Freud... was... blind... to the contribution the isolation, boredom, and intellectual frustration made to the etiology of hysteria. Nearly all the subjects in *Studies in Hysteria* (as well as later *Dora*) were acknowledged by Freud to be unusually intelligent, creative, energetic, independent, and, often, highly educated... Yet Freud never made the connection... between the monotonous domestic lives these women were expected to lead after they completed their schooling, and the emergence of compulsive daydreaming, hallucinations, dissociations, and hysterical conversions.³⁷

This lack of awareness or understanding of women's social experience influencing their mental and physical health, as well as power in society, was elucidated in the mid-twentieth century, when Simone de Beauvoir noted this connection in *The Second Sex*. Taken on by feminists as the "bible" of the second wave of feminism, the book was seminal in developing 'gender studies':³⁸

'Gender' is the overarching concept for research which is oriented on the inventory and analysis of power relations between men and women and also within men or women. Gender is the social-cultural counterpart to sexual difference. Gender studies is guided by the social-constructivist insight brought home by Simone de Beauvoir (1990 [1949]) that we are not born as women (or as men) but that we are made woman in a society characterized by patriarchal gender relations. Research in gender studies is concerned with critically reviewing the rigid patterns of patriarchal relations and is not bogged down by a biological, deterministic concept of men and women.³⁹

³⁵ Greer (1970/2006), pp. 55.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Bordo (1993), p. 158.

³⁸ Van der Tuin (2009), p. 16.

³⁹ Van der Tuin (2009), p. 2.

Howson (2005), referencing Rodin (1992), gives more examples from modern women's gendered experience of the power play that Greer mentions:

There are historical continuities between the development of PMS as a diagnostic category and nineteenth-century ideas about hysteria... Within the latter, legal and medical discourses were developed and deployed to highlight the irrationality and lack of control embodied by the hysterical woman. Such discourses contributed to the exclusion of women from higher education. Similarly, PMS, with its focus on hormonal imbalance and the association with 'unpredictability' this brings, is deployed to legitimize claims that women ought not to be given positions of responsibility in the public sphere.⁴⁰

In feminist literature, the reclaiming of hysteria could be seen as symptomatic rebellion against the failings of the system that kept women powerless and under control. Devereux (2014) in her essay 'Hysteria, Feminism, and Gender Revisited: The Case of the Second Wave' makes such a case, beginning with a comprehensive historical and current account of the state of affairs with regard to 'hysteria'. She says, "The disappearance [in the 1980s] from the North American diagnostic manual of the etymologically gendered term *hysteria* [after thirty years]⁴¹ might have been anticipated to generate some small celebration, at least among those interested in the status and the rights of women", but found that the term was beginning to be "reclaimed" in feminist discourse.⁴²

Devereux gives a brief history of the 'invention of hysteria' by Freud and his colleague Joseph Breuer in the 19th century, highlighting Freud's development of his theories of hysteria's cause, initially as "a psychical scar or trauma", which he later attributed to women's lack of penis, of feeling 'castrated'.⁴³ If Freud had only realised the castration was social, rather than physical, he might have been onto something. Instead, he thought women's 'lack' could be cured by 'replacing' the penis with

⁴⁰ Howson (2005), p. 51.

⁴¹ Devereux (2014), p. 23.

⁴² Devereux (2014), p. 20.

⁴³ Devereux (2014), p. 24.

domesticity, fulfilling her 'normal' role as bearer of children, inevitably equating childlessness in women with pathology.⁴⁴

Jacques Lacan's psychoanalytic theories of 'the mirror stage' in the 1970s "emphatically pushed [women] back into a role as man's negated obverse...as the *other* [to the speaking male subject] and [as] the unconscious", leaving "[w]omen, engaged since the 1960s across the feminist movement in forms of social and cultural revolution" out in the cold.⁴⁵ She names French feminists Catherine Clément and Hélène Cixous's 1975 book *Le jeune née* (*The Newly Born Woman* - Betsy Wing's English translation 1986) and Luce Irigaray's 1974 *Speculum de l'autre femme* (*Speculum of the Other Woman*), among others, as dissenting voices in the discourse to "address the problem of hysteria as a condition of femininity constituted in psychoanalytic theory as lack—"No Thing," as Irigaray famously put it in *Speculum of the Other Woman* (48)—as the "articulation" of women's exclusion from language, where the male subject is constituted".⁴⁶ She also names Julia Kristeva, "whose voice for theories of the relation between hysteria, language, and gendered subjectivity are central to the emergence of feminist theory".⁴⁷ The French feminists' enquiry led to "hysterical engagement", where "women reclaimed hysteria because its "protolanguage" served as a simultaneous index of forms of gender oppression and a space to stage resistance to it".⁴⁸

Devereux names Elaine Showalter as "[t]he strongest feminist voice...against "hysterical engagement" in the late twentieth century", citing *The Female Malady* (1985), important essay 'Hysteria, Feminism, and Gender' in *Hysteria Beyond Freud* (1993), and *Hystories: Hysterical Epidemics and Modern Culture* (1997).⁴⁹ In the latter, Showalter brings to view both female and male forms of 'hysteria'-like maladies of the 20th century, to include 'chronic fatigue' and 'Gulf War' syndromes; Devereux sees this treatment as a dispersal of hysteria's connection with women. In her conclusion, Devereux counters the formidable voice of Showalter, reasserting the

⁴⁴ Devereux (2014), p. 25.

⁴⁵ Devereux (2014), p. 26.

⁴⁶ Devereux (2014), p. 27.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Devereux (2014), p. 29.

⁴⁹ Devereux (2014), p. 34.

need to reclaim “the uterus as a space for the construction of feminine [i.e. female] subjectivity”.⁵⁰ She concludes, “The womb remains in 2014, as in the years around 1981, a site for the contesting of women’s rights”.⁵¹

While I celebrate Devereux’s points, what I mean to critique with regard to hysteria, to follow on from McClary, is its overuse - and one could say appropriation – by male composers and librettists for female expression in operatic works, leading to female characters being one-sided, lacking adequate depth to reflect the complexity of emotional expression available to the female performer. Historical works portray women characters reacting ‘hysterically’, for example, to losing her male counterpart, as if she were a rib wrenched from Adam’s side: Mozart’s seemingly strong, complex Pamina in quest story *The Magic Flute* suddenly becomes suicidal when her lover Tamino seems to reject her. While wielding a knife, she sings ‘Ach, ich fühl’s’. Bellini’s Elvira in *I Puritani* goes mad, thinking her lover has forsaken her. Indeed, in looking critically at the character of Erin in contemporary opera *Flight Paths* (2012), (aside from the dubious treatment of Erin from a racial, class, and gender point of view – the character necessarily written as a working class black girl of about sixteen - by a white, middle class librettist), Strickson’s portrayal of Erin as suicidal / hysterical lacks sufficient cause in the story: Erin, a young, single mum, has had to take a break from her schooling; because her mother is ill, she can no longer take care of Erin’s daughter Shaneka while Erin studies. Does this constitute a strong reason for hysteria and suicidal tendencies, I ask?

There are times when hysteria does have its place, e.g. as in Barbara Hannigan’s performance of Ligeti’s *Mysteries of the Macabre* and portrayal (and description) of Gepopo as “hysterical”, discussed again later in the Literature Review. Ligeti’s treatment of Gepopo’s terror is understandable, his having discovered the imminent annihilation of the planet via a comet. In contrast, while I would contest the portrayal of Erin’s backstory as sufficiently hysteria-inducing, what redeems the character portrayal, in my estimation, is the quest story, where we see Erin transform. By showing a range of emotions, interacting and creating relationships with female characters who guide her and give her perspective, and by undertaking the physical

⁵⁰ Devereux (2014), p. 40.

⁵¹ Devereux (2014), p. 42.

task of following the cliff path on her quest, Erin does reach the status of an embodied, fully-human female protagonist with agency.

This brought my enquiry to the topic element of quest, an essential part of the female protagonist's story:

If we are to insist on the contingency of feminine characteristics as the product of conditioning, we will have to argue that the masculine-feminine polarity is actual enough, but not necessary. We will have to reject the polarity of definite terms, which are always artificial, and strike for the freedom to move within indefinite terms. On these grounds we can, indeed we must reject femininity as meaning *without libido*, and therefore incomplete, subhuman, a cultural reduction of human possibility, and rely upon the indefinite term female, which retains the possibility of female libido... It is exactly the element of quest in her sexuality which the female is taught to deny.⁵²

In the above quotes from Germaine Greer's 1971 feminist book *The Female Eunuch*, I would like to highlight the word *quest*. While Greer is specifically referring to sexuality here, to which I made reference in *Woman on a Box*, she later highlights how this denial of a basic human need extends into every corner of a woman's life, leaving her without agency, a sense of power and certainly without the courage to quest:

She is not only taught to deny [the element of quest in her sexuality] in her sexual contacts, but... in all her contacts, from infancy onward, so that when she becomes aware of her sex the pattern has sufficient force of inertia to prevail over new forms of desire and curiosity.⁵³

Greer says that "we must reject femininity as meaning *without libido*, and therefore incomplete, subhuman, a cultural reduction of human possibilities, and rely upon the indefinite term female, which retains the possibility of female libido".⁵⁴ This assertion is largely why I changed my PhD title early on from *Performing the Feminine in Music* to *A Contemporary Voice for the Female Protagonist*. This way, there is no confusion about terminology or risk of limitation of the Feminine Stereotype, exemplified perfectly by the sexless (and impossibly-bodied) Barbie doll in Greer's follow-up book

⁵² Greer (2012/1971), p. 79.

⁵³ Ibid, p. 78.

⁵⁴ Ibid, p. 79.

The Whole Woman,⁵⁵ but instead allows for a wide range of female experience to be drawn upon for performance and characterisation. Many of the pieces within the portfolio have elements of the female quest or journey in their narrative. Certainly in *Flight Paths* librettist Adam Strickson (and subsequently composer Stephen Kilpatrick) explores the quest journey of Erin from suicidal schoolgirl through her transformation into balanced and hopeful young woman. *Green Angel* has elements of quest in that the lost Ash transforms into Green in the spring, with the help of several characters she meets on her journey, upon which she has unwittingly and unwillingly embarked. *The Night Bride*'s Anna goes through trials and tribulations, after which she is transformed.

It is imperative that the female be represented as the whole human being, rather than as a foil for the masculine 'norm'. It is creating a 'her-story'. This is why new musical theatre and concert works such as those in the portfolio are so important. They allow for storytelling from 'her' perspective, not merely as an alternative to 'his', but having its own merits unto itself. This is where the element of the female protagonist and female quest comes into play. All the works in this portfolio – including *Green Angel*, *Flight Paths*, *The Night Bride*, *ELEGEIA* (for Anna), and *to the wider ocean* - can and will be framed from the perspective of the quest and transformation of one or more female protagonists, with one notable 'exception to prove the rule' in *Mary, Polly, Sukey, Jack and Jill*. The piece contrasts the fully-human characters of the previous portfolio works by presenting a doll-like caricature composite character in which archetypes and stereotypes can be explored in a humorous way. In a way, the performance is a follow-on from original work *Woman on a Box* (2001/2006) in my quest for breaking through stereotypes and societal expectations of women using humour. *Mary, Polly, Sukey, Jack and Jill* seems an opportunity to poke fun at these stereotypes.

To discuss the way the female protagonist is physically portrayed on stage, we must look to gender theory on embodiment. Davis (1997) underlines the role of the body in feminist discourse: "For feminist scholars, the body has always been – and continues to be – of central importance for understanding women's embodied experience and practices and cultural and historical constructions of the female body in the various

⁵⁵ Greer (2000), p. 30.

contexts of social life”.⁵⁶ She defines embodiment as “individuals’ interactions with their bodies and through their bodies with the world around them”.⁵⁷

Waskul and Vannini (2006) further explain the discourse of embodiment:

[P]eople do not merely ‘have’ a body – people actually *do* a body. The body is fashioned, crafted, negotiated, manipulated and largely ritualized social and cultural conventions.⁵⁸

They continue:

[I]f the body is something that people do then it is in the doings of people – not their flesh – that the body is embodied; an *active* process by which the body is literally reali(ized) and made meaningful. The body is wrought of action and interaction in situation social encounters and often by means of institutionalized ritual. In communicative action the body comes to be.⁵⁹

In other words, the actions the body takes, through movement or task achievement, can be viewed in a gendered way. How is gender performed? Judith Butler, who “has been highly influential in breaking down the distinction between biological bodies and socially constructed gender difference”,⁶⁰ asserts the fluid nature of gender:

[G]ender is in no way a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts proceed; rather, it is an identity tenuously constituted in time... [and] instituted through a *stylized repetition of acts*. Further, gender is instituted through the stylization of the body, and, hence, must be understood as the mundane way in which bodily gestures, movements and enactments of various kinds constitute the illusion of an abiding gendered self.⁶¹

In other words, it is our habitual way of using our bodies for expression that continues to perform us as ‘gendered’ in the world:

For Butler, women are neither born, nor made [a statement that counteracts Simon de Beauvoir’s (1949/1952) statement that ‘women are made and not born’]; they appropriate the cultural prescriptions on sex – often in compliance

⁵⁶ Davis (1997), p. 7.

⁵⁷ Davis (1997), p. 9.

⁵⁸ Waskul & Vannini (2006): p. 6.

⁵⁹ Waskul & Vannini (2006): p. 7.

⁶⁰ Davis (1997), p. 9.

⁶¹ Butler (2002) p. 120.

with heterosexual norms, but sometimes in ways which disrupt these norms, thereby causing 'gender trouble'.⁶²

Butler, while critical of de Beauvoir's assertions in terms of the 'fixed' nature of women's situation as a cultural construct, does agree with her on one thing: "If there is something right in Beauvoir's claim that one is not born, but rather *becomes* a woman, it follows that *woman* itself is a term in process, a becoming, a constructing that cannot rightfully be said to originate or to end".⁶³ In other words, the word 'woman' and its meanings are in constant flux.

Van der Tuin (2009) explains French feminist Simone de Beauvoir's famous quote "one is not born a woman, but *becomes* one"⁶⁴: "Because one is *made* female, because femininity is a social construct, alternatives can be designed".⁶⁵ De Beauvoir's work discusses how female characters have been historically portrayed in a variety of art and media, including in opera/music theatre contrasts this agency:

Fairytales, literature, past and present events – they will always position the subject as a token of masculinity, with a host of connotations in its wake: what is active and free, the rational, consciousness, mind, culture, self-determination, responsibility, and being. Conversely, the object, the passive and unfree, the irrational [hysterical], the unconscious, body, nature, *being* determined, being unaccountable, and nothingness will time and again signify femininity... Masculinity is always valued higher.⁶⁶

In music theatre/ opera, if a character dares to be independent, e.g. Carmen and Lulu, she is often sanctioned, as Clément highlights in *L'opéra ou la défaite des femmes* (1988/1979): "In Clément's reading, opera heroines must die because they are a danger to what is a must remain a man's world: their aspirations to independence are intolerable".⁶⁷ McClary, mentioned above, was greatly influenced by Clément's writings on opera.

In looking at female embodiment in opera, we can look first to female embodiment in society. Davis (1997) references Iris Marion Young's "ground-breaking essay,

⁶² Butler (1993) in Davis (1997), p. 9.

⁶³ Butler (1990), pp. 137-8.

⁶⁴ de Beauvoir (1973), p. 301, in Butler (1986), p. 35.

⁶⁵ de Beauvoir (1988 [1949]), p. 734, in Van der Tuin (2009), p. 8.

⁶⁶ de Beauvoir (1949) in Buikema and van der Tuin (2009), p. 13.

⁶⁷ Clément (1988/1979), p. 47, in Andrews (1995), p. 107.

'Throwing like a Girl', [in which] Young explores the phenomenology [or first-person experience]⁶⁸ of feminine body comportment, motility and spatiality. She shows how the constraints of femininity in contemporary Western societies make it impossible for women to use their full bodily capacities in a free and open engagement with the world".⁶⁹

Young (2005/1980) here examines "movement in which the body aims to accomplish a definite purpose or task" in everyday life (and not regarding dance or sex).⁷⁰ Young relies on Simone de "Beauvoir's account of women's existence in patriarchal society," referencing de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1949). She calls attention to women's dichotomy of existence as defined by de Beauvoir: as *subject* - because she is a human being, and as *object*, because she is "defined as 'Other', as the inessential correlate to man, as mere object and immanence".⁷¹ From a philosophical standpoint, 'immanence' is defined as "taking place in the mind but having no effect outside of it".⁷² She is subjected to the male (and female) gaze, defined by Carter and Steiner (2004) as:

A psychoanalytic notion popularized in the 1970s by US film scholar Laura Mulvey who argued that mainstream films are constructed to allow men to identify with the male protagonist, and to see through his eyes. Female audiences also view films through this male gaze, thus eroticizing and objectifying female characters in a similar fashion to male audiences.⁷³

In her observational research of women's everyday movement, Young notices that, in sitting, standing and walking, women in contemporary urban society take up less space than men, through folding of arms and legs, smaller stance and gait.⁷⁴ What I am interested in with relation to character portrayal - which, in opera requires stylised, large movement - is the way Young has observed women doing strength-based tasks and how they lack confidence in their own abilities physically.⁷⁵ In creating characters on stage, then, I am interested in generating a powerful physical

⁶⁸ Woodruff Smith (2003), no pagination.

⁶⁹ Davis (1997), p. 9.

⁷⁰ Young (2005/1980), p. 30.

⁷¹ Young (2005/1980), p. 31.

⁷² 'Immanence', dictionary.com.

⁷³ Carter and Steiner (2004), p. 349.

⁷⁴ Young (2005/1980), p. 32.

⁷⁵ Young (2005/1980), p. 33-34.

presence that depicts female characters as being able to use the physical space and to actively exert their intention in their on-stage tasks in a powerful (i.e. physically strong *and* socially effectual) way. Young says:

The more a girl assumes her status as feminine, the more she takes herself to be fragile and immobile and the more she actively enacts her own body inhibition.⁷⁶

Young continues with the consequences of buying into the ‘feminine status’, saying, “I have an intuition that the general lack of confidence that we frequently have about our cognition or leadership abilities is traceable in part to an original doubt in our body’s capacity”.⁷⁷ This is a topic Greer explores in depth with regard to sexuality in *The Female Eunuch*, discussed above. By showing strong, effectual female characters on stage, rather than inactive/ineffectual or showing a small range of physicality, I hope to influence young girls to use their bodies powerfully, too, and to take up space. This is part of my quest for contributing to the canon works featuring the powerfully embodied onstage female protagonist.

The female protagonist must also be powerful and realistic in her speech. While each character I present in the portfolio is gendered, retaining the hallmarks of ‘femininity’ or ‘femaleness’ in the body and choices of gestural, postural, and spatial movement, each is shown to have *agency* and to be *in action*. She is not on a box or plinth to be looked at (objectified), like a statue, but is the *subject*, who has a range of inner (emotional) and outer (physical action and agency in the world) workings. She may discuss a range of topics important to her, the importance of which Alison Bechdel highlights in her 1985 feminist comic strip. NPR’s Neda Ulaby says, “Twenty-three years ago, in a strip headlined ‘The Rule’... cartoonist Alison Bechdel promoted an idea: That women on screen ought to express their real feelings about all aspects of their lives [and not just about men]. That ultimately, the women on TV and in movies ought to be characters, not clichés”.⁷⁸ Bechdel’s comic strip character sets out three criteria for watching films: “One, it has to have at least two women in it, who, two, talk

⁷⁶ Young (2005/1980), p. 44.

⁷⁷ Young (2005/1980), p. 45.

⁷⁸ Ulaby, Neda (2008) ‘The ‘Bechdel Rule,’ Defining Pop-Culture Character’ [Online] <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=94202522>.

to each other about, three, something besides a man”.⁷⁹ The same rule can be applied to women characters on stage. Examples from the portfolio of ‘a range of topics’ (“besides a man”) each opera/music theatre character may discuss or portray are: *family relationships* (e.g. *Green Angel* – Ash talks about how the loss of her family and of her own self has left her bereft.), *things she enjoys doing* (e.g. Ilona in *Flight Paths* talks about bird watching and sea-diving and indicates how important these are to her. In the same piece, Spitfire Irene talks about having delivered planes to the front lines as a pilot during World War II, as well as motherhood and Tai Chi.), and *how she feels about herself or her situation* (e.g. we hear Anna’s inner voice in the Narration sections of *The Night Bride*, and she outwardly rejects the ‘old wives’ tales’ about “wedding nights golden and new” that did not prepare her for her kidnapping and rape). In terms of subject matter of new concert pieces, *to the wider ocean* also explores motherhood and relationships through poetry, music and video art, and *ELEGEIA* takes the audience on an affective journey through grief in the voco-physical embodiment of the female mourner.

Another level of enquiry takes form in the collaborative methods used in the process of creation of portfolio pieces, which will be discussed in the Methodology section. To contextualise my own work, however, it is necessary to look at collaborative methods used in music theatre/operatic stage realisations, as well as devised theatre. Later, I will discuss the co-creative process by the performer Roy Hart, highlighting collaborative work between him and composer Peter Maxwell-Davies.

Waskul and Vannini (2006) sum up the Paul Atkinson’s analysis ‘Opera and the Embodiment of Performance’, where he hits on points of collaboration in opera: “Atkinson examines how through the rehearsal process opera directors and performers negotiate the creation of roles and relations through the physical accomplishment of gesture, orientation, gaze, and movement within the space defined by the stage set”.⁸⁰ Atkinson himself, while looking at the way gesture and physicality create a language of embodiment, notes the collaborative effort between cast and crew in the co-creation of characters, saying, “Rehearsal is thoroughly

⁷⁹ Bechdel, Alison (1985) ‘The Rule’. *Dykes to Watch Out For*. Firebrand Books, in Ulaby, Neda (2008) ‘The ‘Bechdel Rule,’ Defining Pop-Culture Character’ [Online] www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=94202522.

⁸⁰ Waskul and Vannini (2006), pp. 7-8.

dependent on repetitious patterns of activity. There is, therefore, a repetitious dialogue between a world of embodied gestures and physical movements, and the commentary of performers and producers in the shared search for plausible and satisfactory representations of opera's narratives and characters".⁸¹ He continues, further underscoring interdependence of players in the collaborative process:

Rehearsals are characterized by the search for interpretative frames of reference through which producers and performers can make sense of the words they find in the libretto, the action of the opera, the music that pervades the work, and their understanding of how to put these things together. Bodies and intentions, words and actions are brought into a dialogic relationship in rehearsal.⁸²

Finally, he mentions the usual production of operas, which are created under the leadership of the director (producer), who often demonstrates physicality he wants performers to embody.⁸³

Jean Andrews in 'Carmen, or the undoing of women' (1995) provides a cogent analysis of three productions of Bizet's opera *Carmen*, also highlighting the amount of producer-required mimesis in the processes of each, as Atkinson mentions, which reflects on the feminist (or not!) readings of the opera. Andrews' main observations are summed up in the introduction to *Feminist Subjects, Multimedia: Cultural Methodologies*:

Carmen, whom [Catherine] Clément considers as the most feminist, the most independent-minded of opera's doomed heroines, is destined to die because she is a woman who refuses to conform. Andrews' readings of the three versions of the opera show how this defiance can also operate at the level of performance. In the film versions... the female performers have to reproduce femininity as imagined by the male [choreographer], and Carmen is 'on show' for the gaze of the male spectator. [In contrast, i]n the Nuria Espert production... Carmen... refuses to submit to the male gaze, and it is Don José, rather than [Maria Ewing as] Carmen who is 'on show'. Here, the irrational power of the feminine is aligned with the power of the dangerous female, the outsider who threatens patriarchal power structures, thereby creating a powerful feminist production of Carmen.⁸⁴

⁸¹ Atkinson (2006): p. 98.

⁸² Atkinson (2006): p. 104.

⁸³ Atkinson (2006): p. 105.

⁸⁴ Florence & Reynolds (1995), p. xviii.

Both Atkinson and Andrews, however, present methods for producing existing operatic works, rather than new works, where ‘workshopping’ of sections of material is common practice in the development process. By workshopping, I mean ‘trying out musical material’ in informal rehearsal showings for the composer to hear and evaluate what he/she has written and for vocalists and dramaturgs, e.g., to give feedback. Two contrasting workshopping processes, via operatic mezzo-soprano Taylor Wilson and soprano Nadine Benjamin (formerly Mortimer-Smith), are elucidated in the Case Studies section. Also, *Green Angel* is an example of a work that was ‘workshopped’ in a showing, previous to the final work.⁸⁵ This helped me learn the material and allowed for feedback and development of the piece.

In terms of the production of *Flight Paths* opera, the music was not workshopped because it was fully written, although the composer had hoped to have time within the schedule for workshopping material.⁸⁶ Some elements of dramaturgical workshopping, however, or in this case devising, in the form of ‘trying out and choosing action within the existing material, in a self-directed or group-devised way’, did take place; the director, who was also the producer and librettist, gave some input and direction but left many acting choices to the cast, as well as to musical director Jonathan Lo. For example, Lo made decisions on entrances and exits of the lead cast. As an ensemble, colleagues and I also collaboratively made decisions on blocking and how we interacted. For example, in the final scene of *Flight Paths*, Nadine Benjamin (formerly Mortimer-Smith) and I collaboratively choreographed our physical interactions as Erin and Ilona, while Taylor Wilson chose stillness for Spitfire Irene. This was an unusual situation for an opera, where, as above, producer direction is often very involved. The process of devising theatre is another method of creation and collaboration.

Alison Oddey (1994) throws light upon the process of devised theatre in her book *Devising Theatre: A Practical and Theoretical Handbook*: “A devised theatre product is work that has emerged from and been generated by a group of people working in

⁸⁵ Redhead, Lauren (2010). ‘*Green Angel* Act 1 Workshop Performance’. [Online] <https://vimeo.com/14057706>, accessed 20 Jan 2016. My performance begins at (11:29).

⁸⁶ Kilpatrick, S (2011) Rehearsal discussions about Linda, Ilona, and *Flight Paths*. Sept, Bridlington. In person.

collaboration”, rather than from a written text.⁸⁷ The ensemble piece “is determined and defined by [the] group who set up an initial... structure to explore and experiment with ideas, images, concepts, themes, or specific stimuli that might include music, text, objects, paintings, or movement”.⁸⁸ Oddey also stresses individuals’ personal investigative enquiry, “integrating and transforming their... experiences, dreams, research, improvisation and experimentation”.⁸⁹ In the Methodology section, I will discuss how the collaborative processes of *ELEGEIA* and *to the wider ocean* can be likened to the devised theatre process.

In looking at collaborative process by Roy Hart in the original co-creation of *Eight Songs for a Mad King* with composer Peter Maxwell-Davies for its premiere in 1969, we see that the piece was written with Hart’s vocal abilities in mind, and has graphic elements, leaving much to the interpretation of the performer. Maxwell-Davies’ familiarity with Hart’s skill set – “I had him, as it were, in my ear when I was composing”⁹⁰ would have greatly helped in its success:

Indeed, the success of *Eight Songs* was arguably a result of a combination of factors, including (but not limited to) the curious mixture of performance conventions, Davies’s daring compositional style, the composer’s effective (and often affecting) setting of Stow’s delusional King figure, and Roy Hart’s facility with extended-voice technique and ability as a performer. In addition to requiring that the vocalist have an extended vocal range, Davies’s work includes notations in the singer’s part for chordal effects, articulated breathing, overtones, harmonics, and variations of Sprechgesang (a type of vocal enunciation between speech and song).⁹¹

Hart’s prowess extended not only into the vocal realm, but in the ability to develop *Eight Songs* as a piece of experimental devised theatre, bringing to fore his immense role in the co-creation of the character in the realised performance. It can certainly be said Roy Hart co-created the piece. This brings us to the topic of attribution in performed and recorded works.

⁸⁷ Oddey (1994), p. 1.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Maxwell-Davies in conversation with the author, in Krüger (2015), p. 25.

⁹¹ Curtin (2009), no pagination.

When Hannah Bosma (1996)⁹² asks who is the author/creator of a musical work, she is particularly referring to female voices in electronic music. Bosma speaks of the disembodied voice of the vocalist as having compositional merit: "...although vocalists often made important creative contributions to tape-compositions, they are seldom acknowledged as co-composers or vocal authors, and sometimes not acknowledged at all".⁹³ This is especially relevant when the particular performance serves to create essential characteristics of a fixed-medium piece, such as in Luciano Berio's *Visage* (1961) and *Thema: Omaggio a Joyce* (1958):

An example of this neglect of the female voice is Luciano Berio's composition *Thema: Omaggio a Joyce* (1958)...[which] consists completely of the recorded voice of Cathy Berberian reading a part of James Joyce's *Ulysses* in a particular way. The recording of the voice is often severely manipulated; a continuum can be heard varying from 'natural' voice to abstract sound. Berberian's voice is very characteristic for the piece. However, her name is not even mentioned in the credits of the piece, [n]or in an article Berio wrote about *Thema* [in 1959], [or] in many other texts about *Thema* (like Dressen 1982).⁹⁴

This topic is relevant in discussion of my collaborative work *ELEGEIA* (for Anna) for electroacoustic tape and live vocals, by Nikos Stavropoulos and Anikó Tóth. In *ELEGEIA* (for Anna), I worked with composer Nikos Stavropoulos to create a co-composition with him based on a symbiotic relationship; I brought musical stimuli and my own voice, much like Berberian brought to Berio in many of his works, starting with her wide-ranging vocal palette.⁹⁵ To continue, Bosma states:

In Western classical music, the composer writes a score, which will be interpreted into musical sound by a performer; this co-production is the music the listener hears... Performers often usurp the authorial power. A performer... 'creating a role' is a 'second author' 'who completes the work in her... own interpretation'⁹⁶ and on whom the composer is dependent.⁹⁷

⁹² Bosma (1996), pp. 1-8.

⁹³ Bosma (1996), p. 4.

⁹⁴ Bosma (1996), p. 4.

⁹⁵ Meehan (2011), pp. ii-iii.

⁹⁶ Bosma quoting Abbate, C (1993) 'Opera; or the invoicing of women.' in *Musicology and Difference: Gender and Sexuality in Music Scholarship*, ed. Ruth A. Solie, pp. 225-58. Berkeley: University of California Press.

⁹⁷ Bosma (1996), p. 7.

With this idea we can ask the question: who is the creator of musical works, in the performance of characters in opera and music theatre? Is it the librettist, who frames a character (which I would call the skeleton), the composer, who gives the emotional subtext⁹⁸ (which I call the brains and muscles, spirit), or the performer, who completes the fleshing out, *creating* and communicating the character to an audience, making use of her particular vocal skills and choices in vocal expression, as well as dance/movement and acting skills and choices using the stimulus of costume in addition to the original stimuli of words and music. Abbate confirms that, while the performer's role as co-author is often contested by the composer in opera, it is she, in fact, whose interpretation is channeled to the audience:

Author politics in music are thus in great measure also performer politics, for when confronted with human sources of sonority in live performance we [the audience] create for ourselves a polyphony, in which the noise-making of the human individuals before us — as a little drama of usurpation that powerfully disperses the “composer's voice” — encourages us to assume the other singers, inside the music.⁹⁹

In the case of opera / music theatre, especially in new works where all are living creators, the voice of the librettist/director/producer and *then* the composer can be dispersed, as the final step in co-authorship is the performer's. This brings me to the final strand of enquiry, performance.

Salzman and Desi (2008) give a definition of new music theatre:

[W]hen we say *new music theater* in this book, [we mean:] ...[m]usic theater is theater that is music driven (i.e., decisively linked to musical timing and organization [sic]) where, at the very least, music, language, vocalization [sic], and physical movement exist, interact, or stand side by side in some kind of equality but performed by different performers and in a different social ambience than works normally categorized [sic] as operas (performed by opera singers in opera houses) or musicals (performed by theater singers in "legitimate" theaters).¹⁰⁰

The above definition highlights the equal importance of two elements of performance that I consider essential for characterisation: vocalisation and physical movement.

⁹⁸ Strickson (2011), p. 2.

⁹⁹ Abbate (1993), pp. 235-236.

¹⁰⁰ Salzman and Desi (2008), p.5.

Essential to my on-stage characterisation is my referencing of acting and performance techniques developed by Constantin Stanislavski. Even though music theatre uses a 'heightened' reality, Stanislavski's naturalistic acting techniques do inform my performance practice, and the performance of other music theatre performers, such as mezzo-soprano Taylor Wilson (see Case Studies):

Whereas a singer has to be concerned only with his voice and breathing, a dancer with his physical apparatus, and a pianist with his hands or a wind instrumentalist with his breathing and lip technique - an actor is responsible [at one and the same time] for his arms, his legs, his eyes, his face, the plasticity of his whole body, his rhythm, his motion...¹⁰¹

Stanislavski's statement that 'singers need only think of vocal technique' sounds naïve and old fashioned now; gone are the days when singers, certainly of new music theatre / opera, can simply be concerned with their "voice and breathing". Instead, we must work to create characters as actors in the way Stanislavski states above, using every aspect of our physical apparatus - to include dance - to bring characters to life, as Salzman and Desi (2008) indicate above.

Stanislavski also highlights the importance for the actor of costume and makeup:

When you have created even one role, you know how necessary an actor's wig, beard, costume, props all are to his creation of an image... Only he who has travelled the difficult path of achieving a physical form for the character he is to play ... can understand the significance of each detail... of make-up and accessories... A costume or an object appropriate to a stage figure ceases to be a simple material thing, it acquires a kind of sanctity for an actor.¹⁰²

For the acting singing performer, costume and makeup choices help to shape characterisation, in addition to the musical and lyrical information given by the librettist and composer. This is relevant particularly in *Green Angel*, *Flight Paths*, and most notably *Mary*, *Polly*, *Sukey*, *Jack and Jill*, where costume is an absolutely essential stimulus for the performer in the creation of character. Costume changes, such as the removal of a belt, can have strong symbolic meaning, such as in *The Night Bride*, and even black concert attire can show that the female protagonist is not

¹⁰¹ Stanislavski (1924/1990), pp. 71-72.

¹⁰² Stanislavski (1924/1990), pp. 42-43.

a character, but the singing performer herself, whom she embodies on stage, as in *to the wider ocean* and *ELEGEIA* (for Anna).

An example of a performer who creatively uses costume and engages fully in dramaturgy, using intelligence and creativity to co-create a character, is Barbara Hannigan, whom I mentioned above. In music theatre piece *Mysteries of the Macabre* (1988-1991) by György Ligeti, how does Canadian soprano Barbara Hannigan collaboratively co-create the character of Gepopo, the chief of the secret police, who is trying, hysterically, to warn the Prince of “a huge comet heading through space towards them which will destroy their planet”?¹⁰³ In a 2011 performance, she wears a black vinyl corset dress with fishnet stockings, simultaneously conducting and singing.¹⁰⁴ While the character of the opera (from which the piece is an adapted excerpt) is male, Hannigan’s embodiment is female, and her co-creation takes on a personalised portrayal of the fearful character, who she transforms to a dominating, fearsome persona. In a 2015 performance, she reinvents the character completely, performing the operatic vocal gymnastics as a trashy/nerdy schoolgirl with pigtails wearing a plaid miniskirt with tight, white cotton schoolgirl top, knee-high white socks (with plaid bows at the top!) and patent leather, black high heels, her slinky, nonchalant walking, sway-back posture and gum-chewing eliciting a wolf-whistle from the audience (0:29).¹⁰⁵ She does not lose the sense of hysteria or panic, however. In the embodiment of the trashy schoolgirl persona, her body shakes and jerks with each uttered phrase, giving a sense of unease and eccentricity or madness. Hannigan’s all-round approach to performance (vocal, physical, costume-conscious) is a prime example of the rigours of co-creating an opera/music theatre character, using the music and nonsensical text as stimulus for adding costume choices and physicality to make the work her own.

The fact that Hannigan herself has agency to co-create the various characters who sing the same material is empowering in itself and highlights Bosma’s point. While the material is channelled through a “hysterical” character, the co-creation by

¹⁰³ Hannigan (2009), no pagination.

¹⁰⁴ René Bosc conducts... (uploaded on Apr 22, 2011) “*Mysteries of the Macabre*” (G. Ligeti) par Barbara Hannigan. [Online] <https://youtu.be/8ZKaMuALMMY>, viewed 15 Jan 2016.

¹⁰⁵ Анатолий Семечук (uploaded on Feb 12, 2015) *György Ligeti – Mysteries of the Macabre – 2015*. [Online] <https://youtu.be/vmCmrZfybPQ>, viewed 3 March 2015.

Hannigan in interpreting and reinterpreting characters brings a set of narratives that the music is unable to convey, alone. Without the embodied performance of Hannigan, the piece might as well be played by a trumpet. (This did happen, when “virtuoso Swedish trumpeter Håkan Hardenberger took over for an ailing soprano on short notice in a Vienna performance of the opera”.¹⁰⁶). The humanity of Hannigan’s contrasting portrayals brings into sharp relief the importance of the co-creative embodiment of the performer in communicating music theatre works to an audience.

In addition to costume and makeup as stimuli for character development, Stanislavski also highlights the importance of listening to the inner meaning of the music:

The production notes of Richard Wagner contain...the secret of producing an opera. You can make human beings out of [his heroes] if you can... plan their actions in consonance with the *inner meaning* of the music and not the *external effects*.¹⁰⁷

How the music brings out certain emotional and personality traits that inform my performance of characters includes the emotional subtext, which underpins (or contrasts) the text. My enquiry into vocal expression of emotion led to my choices of vocal quality in each portfolio piece. In the Case Studies section, I highlight specific vocalists and female composers whose uses of the voice have influenced the portfolio.

To sum up, the creation of the portfolio was guided, initially, by McClary’s feminist approach to women’s portrayal as “male fantasies of transgression dressed up as women” in opera/music theatre, where “[r]eal women... do not enter into [the] picture at all”.¹⁰⁸ In looking at literature surrounding this topic, I found the elements of quest, agency, embodiment of women on stage as physically and vocally expressive led to a new portrayal of female characters, as the fully-human female protagonist. Exploring attribution, I found the acknowledgement that female vocalists’ role could be viewed as collaborative with composers/ librettists in the creation of on-stage characters and electronic music, rather than purely interpretative, could be empowering to female performers. The enquiry into collaborative processes in the

¹⁰⁶ Hannigan (2009), no pagination.

¹⁰⁷ Stanislavski (1924/1990), p. 13.

¹⁰⁸ McClary (1991), p. 110.

arts allowed for a range of tactics for exploring co-creation in rehearsal, in musical development of characters, and during the devising process for collaborative work. I will now discuss how I used this exploration in the Methodology section.

Chapter 3. Methodology

I will discuss my three collaborative methodologies with regard to co-creating characters in new works. In Methodology 1, I discuss the process undertaken in finished pieces; Methodology 2 looks at pieces written specifically for me; and Methodology 3 explains fully-collaborative pieces. I will first give a picture of the range of hybridised and re-contextualised vocal techniques I developed and used within the portfolio, as well as discussing notation as a collaborative tool. Finally, I will discuss the concept of participant observation as a way of developing collaborative skills, after the Case Studies.

3.1. Embodiment of the Female Protagonist

Observed works, such as traditional or mainstream operas and music theatre works as discussed in the Literature Review show an absence of works that portray women as independent entities on stage, with a wide range of priorities, emotional states, character arcs showing personal growth during their storyline, and in which the female protagonist exists as an fully-human entity with agency and a wide range of emotional expression, rather than as a foil to a male protagonist or a one-sided, emotionally crippled or mentally ill person who presents a danger to the male protagonist and must therefore be purged or rescued. My portfolio aims to address this gap by adding new performances of the fully-human female protagonist within new works, creating collaboratively with librettists and composers, as well as through my performance, using vocal techniques, acting and movement skills.

The question I looked at is: how does one co-create a fully-human female protagonist a.) during the creative process in collaboration with librettists and composers and b.) as a performer on stage? Initially in the process, the responsibility for the portrayal of a female character is borne by the librettist. However, the performer herself has agency in deciding which projects she takes on. Depending on the relationship and

on the state of the piece's development in which she undertakes the project, she can have some say in the portrayal of the character with regard to the textual content (words) of a musical piece. An example of this is in the process shared by mezzo-soprano Taylor Wilson in collaborating with librettist/composer Tim Benjamin on 'Silent Jack', in the Case Studies section. In the case of my portfolio, however, in the majority of the works, I undertook projects in which the libretto had been written, collaboratively contributing to the creation of the musical and vocal elements, to include word settings, translations, and some textual alteration for musical integrity. A final step, as iterated by Bosma (1996), is the opportunity for the performer to interpret and co-create the character on stage, during which she can subvert the intentions of the librettist/composer collaborators, if she chooses, and add depth to the character through vocal, facial and body expression to show a myriad of emotional states... as the composer and librettist are "entirely dependent" on her performance interpretation.

To address the gap in staged music pieces with fully-human portrayals of female lead characters – the female protagonist, I undertook a range of collaborative projects to perform premieres of new works. This became my portfolio of six works during which I explored a variety of collaborative methods and vocal styles and techniques to create the final products, the performances. Generally, I set out to work with a range of composers on pieces in which I could make use of the voice in unusual ways or with unusual stylistic juxtapositions to explore an emotionally expressive range within each piece and over the entire portfolio in each female character's journey/transformative quest.

3.2. Vocal Techniques in the Portfolio

Classical, Pop, Folk, Extended Vocal Techniques

To develop new and effective forms of expression, I worked to juxtapose and hybridise a variety of vocal techniques within the portfolio works. The portfolio uses the following vocal techniques and styles: Classical, Pop, Folk, and Extended Vocal Techniques. The vocal styles, qualities and techniques were chosen because of their expressive qualities, my personal skills set and interest. A majority of the pieces called for a Classical aesthetic, which is my main training; there, I looked to create

characters from, not just the vocal, but the physical and emotional perspective, as well as to juxtapose other styles to express a wider emotional range through variety in vocal colour. The piece that mainly used traditional Classical technique in the live performance was *to the wider ocean*. Here, composer-video artist Christine McCombe and I collaborated on multi-layered multi-media, using recorded vocals to include Hungarian lullabies and folk songs sung non-vibrato and *semplice* in a lower range in the videos that accompany the concert. I brought some contemporary elements, to include breathy tone or twang, for example. In *Flight Paths*, the music of Ilona I performed classically, while her melodies were greatly influenced by Hungarian folk song; the character was written specifically for me by the librettist and subsequently the composer, who consulted me directly on mutual musical influences in the form of specific Hungarian folk songs. Similarly in *The Night Bride*, Classical singing with Hungarian folk influence was to be heard in my performance of Anna. Whereas the world premiere was Classical, the UK premiere included folk singing with a chest quality. The role of Linda in *Flight Paths* juxtaposed a pop chest quality with the operatic, also creating a hybrid vocal role.

Green Angel was written with a variety of juxtaposed vocal qualities, making use of extended vocal techniques *Sprechstimme* and *Sprechgesang* (used interchangeably in the score with 'psalm singing'), spoken text and traditional singing, but non-vibrato. The composer's intention in juxtaposing all of these qualities within short phrases seemed to be to show the emotional volatility of the grieving protagonist Ash. Notably, when Ash starts to heal, her vocalisations remain in the singing mode for much longer, with shorter forays into extended vocal techniques.

In *Mary, Polly, Sukey, Jack and Jill*, while the overarching technique was Classical, with its contemporary feel, I was able to explore a range of vocal qualities for the emotionally-volatile narrator Little Bo Peep. Particularly in 'Oh, Dear, What Can the Matter Be?' from the 7-song cycle lent itself to a wide range of vocal (emotional) qualities: the molto-vibrato, high opera tone ('Lulu'), sometimes very sexual with much portamento, or angry, using staccato; the twangy, non-vibrato childlike tone; and the sulky teenager, Classical non-vibrato.

ELEGEIA (for Anna) was an exploration of a range of extended vocal techniques on the theme of grief. Greek folk vocalisation, the death-vigil singing called *Miroloi*, would be considered extended vocals to the Western ear. The Greek improvisation style of the *Aman* also featured non-Classical nasality, chest quality and a non-Western scale, the *makam Saba*. Hungarian folk lamentation singing, also using chest quality, hybridised with a slightly more Classical, weeping sound (using less twang), was also featured in *ELEGEIA*. Extended vocal sounds from the ‘human repertoire’, as found in Luciano Berio’s and Cathy Berberian’s *Visage* and *Sequenza III*, were built upon in the improvisatory recording sessions and chosen based on their affective quality, in putting across the ‘liminal’ sounds of grief, the beyond-language sounds.

3.3. Notation and the Score as Collaborative Tool

A majority of the pieces used traditional notation, including *Flight Paths, to the wider ocean*, and *Mary, Polly, Sukey, Jack and Jill*. *The Night Bride* also used traditional notation within the arias, sung live. These were interwoven with cues and text from the Radiophonics-style fixed medium (tape). *Green Angel* was handwritten, and while the score featured previously-seen but less common notational styles on the stave, e.g. using x note heads for *Sprechstimme*, as in Schoenberg’s *Pierrot Lunaire*, and neume-like treatment of the ‘psalm singing’ sections, the scoring could be seen as experimental and semi-graphic in its rhythmic indeterminacy. The most flexible score, required by its non-traditional extended vocal repertoire and semi-improvisatory nature, was the one I created for *ELEGEIA*. The notation used a mix of: textual indications; symbols that resemble the involved vocal apparatus used, e.g. teeth shaking (showing teeth surrounded by wiggly lines) and nasal gasps (represented by a nose); IPA (international phonetic alphabet); lines moving up or down to indicate rising and falling pitch; pitch names plus range (e.g. Ab5); timed hit-points (to synchronise with the tape underlay); and traditional notation in the folk song sections near the end. (See *ELEGEIA* score key **Appendix 14. 12.14.9.**, for further examples.)

3.4. Methodology 1: Finished Pieces - Performance and Interpretation

For finished pieces, I prepared for initial rehearsals by learning the music and text. I then used the libretto, stage directions, music and any clarifying correspondence from the director and other collaborators (librettist, composer) to begin to flesh out the character, which I would then work to develop in rehearsals using other stimuli, such as staging and blocking, costume, and movement considerations. My main focus was telling the emotional story of each character through voice and movement. This was especially the case with Lauren Redhead/Adam Strickson's *Green Angel* (2011) and Mark Yeats' *Mary, Polly, Sukey, Jack and Jill* (2000).

Green Angel

Green Angel by Lauren Redhead and librettist/producer Adam Strickson was a project in which I participated in preliminary workshop performances in 2010 during which I followed direction and worked to use the libretto and music to help me portray the character. In other words, I came in as performer/interpreter; I had little input into the material of the piece, which was being developed collaboratively by Strickson and Redhead, but I collaboratively created the role on stage in workshops and in the final performances in 2011, under co-direction by Strickson and Redhead. My interpretation of the character of Ash/Green thus became the definitive performance. The staged rehearsal process was unusual in that musical direction, undertaken by Redhead, took place simultaneously to dramaturgical direction from Strickson, with short workshops with movement coach Jorge Balça.

In the *Green Angel* chapter, I will discuss the role and importance of the composer's score and the further importance within the rehearsal process in its interpretation and clarification by Redhead, which was essential due to ambiguities within the score (e.g. terminology, such as psalm-singing versus *Sprechgesang*).

Mary, Polly, Sukey, Jack and Jill

As the piece was already written, I also undertook the challenge of bringing out a variety of vocal and physical characteristics within a single character of Little Bo

Peep, the storyteller of this “nonsense drama”.¹⁰⁹ With very limited discussion with the composer, I worked to interpret the drama from the very detailed music with clear dynamic shifts, time shifts and textural treatment of the orchestral elements. The use of the high *tessitura*¹¹⁰ also gave clear indication of a slightly hysterical character who experiences extremes of emotion. In working mainly with Musical Director Gavin Wayte, I was able to unpick the melodrama and emotional changes and to interpret these shifts using a variety of consciously-chosen, contrasting vocal qualities and styles. I modelled these extreme shifts on the vocal performances by soloist Kelvin Thomas (with Psappha Ensemble) of Peter Maxwell-Davies’ *Eight Songs for a Mad King*,¹¹¹ which seem to have influenced the composer, who worked with Maxwell-Davies at the beginning of his career.

3.5. Methodology 2: Pieces written for the performer

Flight Paths

Two pieces in the portfolio were composed specifically with me in mind as performer, meaning that I had musical input during the creation stage as well as dramatic and musical input during the rehearsal process, with extensive character creation during my own rehearsal process. In *Flight Paths*, I worked with composer Stephen Kilpatrick, with whom I share a musical language in Hungarian folk music, as well as previous collaborative work. Kilpatrick is familiar with my vocal range and preferences, including general *tessitura* of each piece (I am an unusual soprano in that I prefer to sing in a mezzo-soprano range, up to G5 or A5, rather than high C.), as well as my personal knowledge and understanding of Hungarian music. I worked with Kilpatrick on some word settings, making some (much-disputed by librettist Adam Strickson, but minimal) textual changes for musical integrity.

What was notable about the collaborative process of the piece is that, while musically there was some flexibility and availability for discussion by the composer, the librettist/director/producer was determined to maintain the length and textual

¹⁰⁹ Yeats (2000), no pagination.

¹¹⁰ See Glossary.

¹¹¹ Psappha Ensemble (2012) *Eight Songs for a Mad King*, with vocalist Kelvin Thomas. [Video] <http://www.psappha.com/watch-and-listen/vimeo/101079194>, last viewed 16 June 2015.

portrayal of all the characters in the libretto as written, with little input from myself. Nadine Benjamin, formerly Mortimer-Smith, who played main protagonist Erin, managed to work with Strickson in removing some repetitive elements in the text, some of which he wrote in during the rehearsal process.

The Night Bride

I also worked with Stephen Kilpatrick on *The Night Bride* (2012), based on the libretto by Mike Sizemore. In terms of the collaborative process, this piece went through many cycles of collaboration before becoming the music theatre piece on which I collaborated, including a comic book/graphic novel version of the story. Kilpatrick then used these visual elements to ‘colour’ his musical interpretation to create the Tape underlay, in which I collaborated in character creation of the Narrator and Brides through voiceover recording, as well as bringing sung elements from the score into the spoken Tape section, mainly in the Narrator’s part.

The libretto had been written previous to my involvement in the piece’s musical development. However, I was able to collaborate via translation of certain sections into Hungarian, as the piece was based initially on Hungarian folk story *Annie Miller*. This request came from the composer, however, with whom I worked closely. Other elements in which I was able to collaborate in the creative process are word settings, dramaturgical interpretation (Tape and live), choreography (stylised movement) for two contrasting performances, as well as my own interpretation of a Hungarian folk song ‘Túl a vízen zörög a jég’. My own scoring of the piece in the folk style, with personalised embellishments in which I emulated Moldavian-Hungarian singer Beatrix Tárnoki (see case study), became the basis for the first aria. Kilpatrick used the embellishments themselves as the basis for the cimbalom parts throughout the piece.¹¹² This was a major element of musical-compositional collaboration.

3.6. Methodology 3: Fully-collaborative pieces

The two pieces which I commissioned and fully collaborated on in terms of the creative and/or compositional process are *ELEGEIA* (for Anna) (2013), with Nikos

¹¹² Kilpatrick (2013), p. 120-121.

Stavropoulos, and *to the wider ocean* (2014), with Christine McCombe. Oddey (1994) says “Devised theatre... is determined and defined by a group of people who set up an initial framework or structure to explore and experiment with ideas, images, concepts, themes, or specific stimuli that might include music, text, objects, paintings, or movement”.¹¹³ The devised theatre process is similar to that which I undertook with Stavropoulos in my work on *ELEGEIA* and with McCombe on *to the wider ocean* in terms of exploration and experimentation with a variety of stimuli, including visual stimuli. Having worked collaboratively in devising theatre (e.g. site-specific dance theatre for *The Last Big Event* show, 2001) and dance choreography during my undergraduate studies, I felt comfortable with the instinctual process of following whatever leads interested me. My processes with the two composers contrasted in that the theatrical devising process often involves larger groups.

***ELEGEIA* (for Anna)**

With Stavropoulos, I chose a theme and used several stimuli, including textual and visual, in the form of graphic novel *100 Months* by John Hicklenton – chosen because it portrayed my then enquiry into my personal feelings of grief, anger, and depression. A second stimulus was human sounds inspired by Berio-Berberian collaboration *Visage* (1961). I created an extended vocal sound world from this stimulus, which became the first discussion point with my collaborator. Sound stimuli included culturally-coded (Hungarian and Greek) folk music (Greek lamentation singing *Amannes* and death vigil singing *Miroloi*) as inspirations, as well as for Stavropoulos, electroacoustic music, and extended vocal techniques in online media which we shared, discussed and used as further stimuli. In creating sketches of recorded or mocked-up material, we began a dialogue, which led to my recorded improvisations in the recording studio, with collaborative input and direction from Stavropoulos, who created from this material the electroacoustic Tape section, over which I sing the live elements. I developed a transcribed written graphic score whose development also helped the collaborative process as a reference point for discussion, as well as becoming a stimulus for further compositional development. I chose my own performance elements, using at costume and makeup elements to

¹¹³ Oddey (1994), p. 1

help emphasise the youthful nature of the character who mourns in all black, hopefully adding to the poignancy and emotional impact of the piece for the audience.

to the wider ocean

With Australian composer McCombe, similarly, I chose themes as part of a personal enquiry into motherhood and mother-daughter relationships. Over a two-year period, in a collaboration entirely done via Skype, file sharing, email, and text message, we discussed a range of topics within the chosen theme. These included distance from homeland (motherland) and homesickness/nostalgia, written correspondence and longing. Feminist subjects were also discussed, such as the taboo of breastfeeding prevalent in Anglo-Saxon countries, and women's health and body politics in the UK, US, and Australia. Indeed, Oddey comments that "a group cannot devise in a vacuum; work originates and progresses within the broadest context of culture and society, the changing world, and all its events" and has to "address... the socio-political and cultural climate at the time".

The cultural coding of women's physical movement in everyday, mundane activities, such as braiding hair or knitting, and learning these skills from grandmothers, and the importance of touch and nostalgic/memory-invoking items (e.g. baby's first shoes) were discussed. We looked at culturally-coded sound stimuli in the form of Hungarian lullabies (mother-taught) and storytelling (grandmother-taught) via recordings, as well as poetry discussing motherhood using sea imagery, which led us to explore sea images to be used in video art to accompany the live music concert. The correspondence theme led to images of personal, handwritten correspondence, a phenomenon rapidly becoming extinct in this increasingly digital world, and therefore becoming a nostalgia-inducing artefact. Oddey further elucidates the way devising takes place collaboratively:

Partners make sense of themselves within their own cultural and social context, investigating, integrating, and transforming their personal experiences, dreams, research, improvisation and experimentation. Devising is about thinking, conceiving, and forming ideas, being imaginative and

spontaneous, as well as planning. It is about inventing, adapting, and creating what you do as a group.¹¹⁴

Indeed, in both of these highly-collaborative works, spontaneity was coupled with planning and assigning ourselves and each other tasks that would support the project and were often interdependent. For example, in including mother-themed lullabies, I 'had to record' these and send them to McCombe, who then 'had to develop' and layer them aurally and, eventually, visually in the video works, e.g. 'Mothers and Daughters' (**Appendix 1. Video 13.**). The music, composed entirely by McCombe, took into account the vocal ranges I had used in the Hungarian lullabies, which made the intimate poetry by Alison Croggon on similar themes more accessible to the audience, as the lower *tessitura* would have made it easily understandable.

While the methodology for each was very different in some ways, such as musical treatment, themes, and type of personal input on my part, some common practices emerged. For example, much discussion via Skype occurred over a long time period in developing each piece. I sent recordings of sounds and musical stimuli to both composers to give them an idea of the emotional communication I wanted to make onstage in the final product. Discussions also involved very personal exchanges as relationships developed, which aimed to add to the intimate, emotional nature of the final pieces.

Chapter 4. Case Studies for Collaboration and Performance

4.1 Two Hungarian singers

This case study discusses two Hungarian vocalists who have become, for me, the definitive authorities on female Hungarian folk singing sound for several reasons.

4.1.1. Márta Sebestyén, Muzsikás Ensemble (historical member)

Having grown up with the music of Muzsikás Ensemble at any Hungarian gathering in Los Angeles, where the Hungarian diaspora holds a small stronghold, this singer's

¹¹⁴ Oddey (1994), p. 1.

voice was ubiquitous, using the resonant chest singing¹¹⁵ that Bartók equated with authentic folk singing: “The Hungarian peasant uses chest-notes. Whenever a singer uses head-notes, we may presume that urban influences have been at work”.¹¹⁶ Muzsikás became known in the diaspora due to their longevity, spanning forty years¹¹⁷, and having “pioneered the global acceptance of Hungarian folk music” with extensive international touring.¹¹⁸ Because of Sebestyén’s ubiquitousness¹¹⁹ and beautiful ‘authentic’ tone, her voice embodied Hungarianness to me. Almost alien to my emerging choral singing¹²⁰ training, I tried to emulate the vocal embellishments she chose in songs like ‘Fújnak a fellegek’ (Dark winds are blowing) and ‘Fúvom az énekem’ (Flute-song).¹²¹

Sebestyén’s composer mother was a student of Zoltán Kodály,¹²² which gives her a depth of authority in being connected, even indirectly, with one of the greatest historical Hungarian folk song collectors / composers and a colleague of Bartók. However, she is revered in her own right, having received numerous awards and is considered in Hungary to be a leading ambassador, nationally and internationally, of the ‘unadulterated’, authentic Hungarian folk song tradition.¹²³

4.1.2. Beatrix Tárnoki

Tárnoki began to receive recognition in the diaspora with the 1997 release of the first volume of *Újélő népzene*,¹²⁴ now on its twentieth volume.¹²⁵ Her performance of ‘Én kimenék küskertembe’ from the Moldavian region of Romania, an even smaller and more culturally-threatened diaspora than Transylvanian Hungarians, was striking with

¹¹⁵ See Glossary.

¹¹⁶ Bartók (1981), p. 50.

¹¹⁷ Muzsikás, www.muzsikas.hu/index2.htm

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Indeed, Sebestyén gained global recognition when her *a cappella* recording of ‘Szerelem, szerelem’ was featured in the opening credits of the Oscar-winning 1996 film *The English Patient*, as well as on Deep Forest’s Grammy award-winning 1995 album *Bohème* album.

¹²⁰ See Glossary.

¹²¹ Muzsikás Ensemble (1990) *Muzsikás*. [CD] Budapest: Hannibal Records, HNBL 1330.

¹²² Sebestyén, Márta. Official Website. [online]

http://www.martasebestyen.com/?page_id=1245&lang=hu, accessed 23 May 2015.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Folk Műhely Alkotóközösség (Folk Workshop Hungary) (1997) *Újélő népzene 1. (Living Village Music)* [CD] Pál Havasréti.

¹²⁵ Folk Műhely Alkotóközösség (Folk Workshop Hungary) *Újélő népzene series List*. [Online] http://tanchaz.hu/hun/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=26&Itemid=43, accessed 23 May 2015.

its expressive and copious melismatic embellishments even more filigreed than Sebestyén's. Indeed, Paksa (1990) indicates that the Moldavian region of Romania traditionally boasts of the most extensive use of folk song embellishment:

Bartók points out that the 8-syllable parlando-rubato tunes are rich in ornaments in the Transylvanian dialect. He makes no mention of the decorations of the other dialectal regions. Since then we have found that the songs with the most ornaments come from Moldavia...¹²⁶

Paksa highlights that, even in 1990, "Decorated singing is still flourishing in the Moldavian musical dialect. Even the folksongs of the new style, having recently found their way into Moldavia, are sung with ornaments".¹²⁷ After hearing this song, I began using it as my new template for singing Hungarian folk music, which I performed regularly as part of the diaspora community in Los Angeles. Indeed, in my Masters studies, I looked at improvisatory variation in orally-transmitted folk songs, specifically in 'Túl a vízen zörög a jég' (Across the water the ice is beating), where I compared the recordings of my mother and sister Kinga, also a singing performer, to my own. Because folk songs are orally transmitted, each generation is essentially communally composing the song, adding personal variation. The theme of co-composition will come into play in later discussions of *Green Angel*, *ELEGEIA*'s folk influences, and *Flight Paths*. However, this particular folk song appears twice in my portfolio as a sound source, as a musical inspiration evocative of the Transylvania countryside and culture for *The Night Bride* with Stephen Kilpatrick (2012), and as a recording of my mother singing the same song¹²⁸ to explore themes of mother-daughter relationships and the distance-absence dichotomy in the preview version of *to the wider ocean* (2014) in collaboration with Christine McCombe.

4.2. Cathy Berberian and Luciano Berio's collaboration

Particularly relevant to my exploration of emotions through the voice using extended vocal techniques, which manifested in portfolio piece *ELEGEIA* (for Anna) with Nikos Stavropoulos, is the sound world pioneered by virtuoso vocalist Cathy Berberian.

¹²⁶ Paksa (1990), p. 281.

¹²⁷ Paksa (1990), p. 286.

¹²⁸ Tóth, Mary (2010), recording.

Janet Halfyard (2004)¹²⁹ discusses Berberian's role as sound-creator and collaborator in her paper 'A few words for a woman to sing: the extended vocal repertoire of Cathy Berberian':

It would be an exaggeration to say that Berberian invented extended vocal technique, but she was profoundly influential in making it part of the compositional vocabulary of European and American composers from 1958 onwards. There are some precedents of extended technique before this: the idea of vocalism *in extremis* is associated particularly with female singers in 19th century opera; Schoenberg's female reciter in *Pierrot Lunaire* is one of the first examples of a vocal performer [in 20th century Western music] who does not actually sing¹³⁰ ... The vocal performers in this area are again all female, both soloists and chorus; and the chorus uses speech, crying, whispering and spoken glissandi. However, after 1958 [when she recorded her personal interpretation of Joyce's *Ulysses*, from the phonemes of which composer Luciano Berio created *Thema: Omaggio a Joyce*], extended vocal technique became strongly associated with Berberian as the performer of a repertoire created around her particular talents.¹³¹

Halfyard's statement about Berberian's variety of vocal repertoire particularly interests me, as I feel a kinship with Berberian, being a vocalist of many genres: "One of the significantly different aspects of Berberian as a singer - particularly as a singer in 1958 when hardly any extended vocal repertoire existed - was the extent to which she specialized in not specializing".¹³² She goes on to discuss the variety of genres and styles Berberian used, from her Classical-Operatic background to the use of chest singing,¹³³ as well as the variety of extended vocals she created. As I am from a similar Classical background but steeped originally in Hungarian Folk singing tradition (as Berberian was in Armenian tradition), then learning to sing Jazz, Musical Theatre, and Pop, I also feel the need to continue the exploration of my voice as expressive instrument in extended technique, rather than limiting myself to one genre.¹³⁴ In creating *ELEGEIA* (for Anna), the Berberian-Berio collaboration process is also an extremely relevant reference point:

¹²⁹ Halfyard (2004), pp. 1-11.

¹³⁰ A new vocal style with a speech like quality was established at this time, later called *Sprechstimme* (speech like), sometimes interchanged with *Sprechgesang* (speech-singing). Salzman (2002), p. 36. See Glossary.

¹³¹ Halfyard (2004), p. 1.

¹³² Halfyard (2004), p. 2.

¹³³ Halfyard (2004), p. 3. See Glossary.

¹³⁴ While I cannot profess to be as virtuosically brilliant as Berberian, these parallels in vocal interests fascinated me and partly inspired my vocal exploration.

The importance of Berio and Berberian's experiments in the studio cannot be underestimated in the development of extended vocal technique as a genre, and in fact, studio experimentation has an important role in the development of extended techniques in general, vocal and instrumental.¹³⁵

In my plan to create a new extended vocal palette I looked to the Berio-Berberian process of creation as a sort of template. Salzman (2002) also highlights the importance of the human voice as the "essential part of the conception" of 1950s electronic pieces:

It is striking that the most significant tape and electronic pieces of the 1950s and early 1960s use the human voice... as an essential part of the conception: Stockhausen's *Gesang der Jünglinge* (1955-56), Berio's *Omaggio a Joyce* (1958) and *Visage* (1961), Babbitt's *Vision and Prayer* (1961) and *Philomel* (1964).¹³⁶

My personal exploration of the voice as expressive tool and as creative fodder, especially in *ELEGEIA* (for Anna), owes much to these early creations, in which the voice can be viewed as a collaborator in composition.¹³⁷ The way I differentiate other *musique concrète* pieces as non-collaborative (necessarily) is that they tend to be based on non-human sounds. As soon as the human element is introduced, I would argue that collaboration comes into play. Indeed, this is Halfyard's (also Bosma's¹³⁸) argument regarding giving credit for pieces like Berio's *Visage* and *Thema: Omaggio a Joyce*, which are both built specifically from Berberian's voice - why is she not credited as co-composer? This element will be discussed in the *ELEGEIA* (for Anna) chapter.

4.3. Taylor Wilson

Opera Singer, Cabaret Chanteuse, Contemporary Classical Vocalist

I have discussed with mezzo soprano Taylor Wilson the collaborative process in working with composers to co-create characters in new music theatre and operatic

¹³⁵ Halfyard (2004), p. 3.

¹³⁶ Salzman (2002), p. 153.

¹³⁷ Bosma (1996).

¹³⁸ Hannah Bosma (1996) also argues for the authorship of the female voice in electronic music, referencing Barthes' concept of 'The Death of the Author' (via Joke Dame). Barthes (1977), pp. 142-148.

pieces. In working with her on opera / music theatre work *Flight Paths* in 2011, I noticed her particular emphasis, not only on musical accuracy and technical proficiency in singing a new work, but also on her acting abilities. Wilson's characterisation of Spitfire Irene was heartfelt and moving, and I wondered what it was about her performance that fleshed out this textually and musically created creature into a fully-human person, who was *believable* on stage. In interviews with Wilson, I have been able to glean valuable information about her preparation of stage characters in operas, and I will discuss her work in contemporary operas *Flight Paths* (2011) (Kilpatrick/Strickson) as Spitfire Irene, as Lady Brannoch in *Madame X* (2014) by Tim Benjamin, and as a historical highway woman in a new one-act opera 'Silent Jack' (2015), collaborating with Tim Benjamin again in this solo work written for her. "*Life Stories*, a double-bill of one-act operas [of which 'Silent Jack' is one], will premiere at the Royal Northern College of Music, Manchester, a tour of northern England, followed by a run of performances at the end of July at London's Tête-à-Tête Festival" in June and July 2015.¹³⁹ I will contextualise her work with reference to Stanislavski's acting techniques and to Elliott's (2006) suggestions for performers when working with composers of new works.

Essential to Wilson's characterisation of Spitfire Irene, aside from the *bel canto*¹⁴⁰ vocal style she uses, is the way she embodies the character. When asked how she created Irene's physicality, she mentioned several Stanislavski acting techniques, including observation¹⁴¹ and imitation during her Bridlington rehearsal period. The retirement community there allowed for close observation of the stiff and slow-moving physicality of ninety-year-old Spitfire Irene, who had been an ATA pilot during the Second World War. In trying out certain movements, she worked to stiffen different parts of her body, such as hunching the shoulders slightly, keeping the knees more straight, rather than bent, and moving the ribcage instead of the stiffened neck when turning. She then modified these to ensure the muscles supportive for singing were still being used effectively, as singing well always takes priority with her. The costume of the stiff tweed coat and high scarf with riding trousers added to Wilson's view that Irene is middle-class and had military training, supporting her choice of the

¹³⁹ Wilson, T (2015) *Taylor Wilson: mezzo soprano, official website*. [Online] <http://www.taylorwilson.com/classical.html>, last accessed 27 May 2015.

¹⁴⁰ See Glossary.

¹⁴¹ Stanislavski (1963/1990).

straight-spined posture. Wilson also made use of the props chosen for the character, for example, the deliberately slow and unsteady use of the walking stick, which Ilona hands back to Irene when she attempts to reach for it, after giving a Tai Chi breathing lesson to Erin after her near-drowning; also, during the first scene in which she meets Erin, the equally slow, deliberate placement of the picnic basket she then opens and the deck chair into which she very slowly sits, with a final drop at the last second. Stanislavski teaches a technique for bringing out emotion through simple movement:

With what is Lady Macbeth occupied at the culminating point of her tragedy? The simple physical act of washing a spot of blood off her hand... In real life also many of the great moments of emotion are signalized by some ordinary, small, natural movement... A small physical act acquires an enormous inner meaning: the great inner struggle seeks an outlet in such an external act. The significance of physical acts in highly tragic or dramatic moments is...that the simpler they are, the easier it is to grasp them, the easier to allow them to lead you to your true objective... By approaching emotion in this way, you avoid all forcing and your result is natural, intuitive, and complete.¹⁴²

Wilson makes great use of this simplicity of movement as Irene in turning her back on Erin at the end, refusing to say good-bye. Wilson's physical portrayal of Spitfire Irene certainly was very natural and touching.

Vocally, Wilson says about the music written for Spitfire Irene by Stephen Kilpatrick that, "the score had been written, and since it suited the [operatic, *bel canto*¹⁴³] voice so well, little was changed." In the case of *Flight Paths*, the opera was put onto the stage as it was written (although Nadine Benjamin, formerly Mortimer-Smith, made several word setting changes due to the high *tessitura*¹⁴⁴ of the vocal lines written for Erin), giving less time for collaborative discussion with the composer. Instead, she worked collaboratively in that she co-created the character by bringing her to life on stage.

In contrast, new works are sometimes created specifically for and with a singer who is commissioned by the composer with the intention of using her specific vocal colours and performance skills. Wilson discussed two examples of this process

¹⁴² Stanislavski (1963/1990), p. 8.

¹⁴³ See Glossary.

¹⁴⁴ See Glossary.

between 2012 and 2015. Wilson talked her collaborative process with commissioning composer John McLeod, who wrote song cycle *Furchtbare Märchen*¹⁴⁵ (*Fearful Tales*) for her in 2012, accompaniment for viola and piano. Before writing the piece, the composer attended a variety of performances that covered Wilson's range of vocal styles and expertise; he heard her sing her one-woman show *Alchemy*, as Pierrot Lunaire in excerpts of Schoenberg's eponymous music theatre piece (which originally introduced *Sprechstimme*¹⁴⁶ to the world in 1914) as well as in Classical context as a mezzo-soprano, which gave him a sense of her sound palette. He also knew she is fluent in German, the language of the song cycle.

The collaboration began with drafts of the work, which Wilson and the composer collaboratively developed through three workshop sessions over a period of three weeks. When I asked how she workshops a piece, she explained:

I workshop in many ways, according to whether the piece has already been written, has been part written, etc. Since I have had bad experiences in the distant past in working with composers that don't really know the voice's workings, it's simply easier to collaborate, and ultimately, everyone will be happier and both the composer and the singer's voice is shown off to its best! In the case of *Furchtbare* it was at the piano myself with the score, where I could plot out the notes where necessary.¹⁴⁷

Wilson is highly aware of the nuances of her voice, including its 'sweet spot', which she divulges to composers who write for her, as well as emphasising the need to move through the range and to use the extreme highs and lows of the voice only sparingly. This is for the joint reasons of avoiding unnecessarily tiring out the singer and for interest of dramatic variation. McLeod tended to write in higher ranges for the voice, as is the tendency of composers in general, she says; in workshop sessions, she was able to suggest some specific passages to remain in the higher range for the aesthetic purpose of sounding ugly. This was to bring out the naughty children characters, for example, as the piece is based on poetry by Heinrich Hoffmann about how naughty children are punished.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁵ Griffin Music (2013) *Furchtbare Märchen*, by John McLeod. [Online] https://soundcloud.com/griffin_music/furchtbare-marchen-fearful, last accessed 29 May 2015.

¹⁴⁶ See Glossary.

¹⁴⁷ Wilson, Taylor (2015) Interview with Taylor Wilson, by Anikó Tóth. in person (via Skype).

¹⁴⁸ Griffin Music (2013) *Furchtbare Märchen*, by John McLeod. [Online] https://soundcloud.com/griffin_music/furchtbare-marchen-fearful, last accessed 29 May 2015.

Wilson's musical, vocal and dramatic suggestions are very clear upon listening to the piece.¹⁴⁹ One highly dramatic example of using highs and lows for drama occurs at (0:50) in the first piece, 'Der Struwwelpeter' (Shockheaded Peter), where the child's name is sung on C#5 (Stru-) and takes a leap of a fourteenth (!) down to F3 (-wwel-) to F#3 (-peter). A very clear contrast in vocal styles is juxtaposed in song 2, 'The Story of Cruel Frederick', where the singer begins on a *bel canto*, sob¹⁵⁰ tone at 2:24 on the text, "Und höre nur wie böse ihr war?" ("Have you heard how bad he was?"), spitting out "böse" (bad). In the response, we hear the change of tone to a breathy, angry, high larynx tone on (2:43) "er peitscher, peitscher, peitscher..." ("He whipped...").¹⁵¹ At the final line of song 3, 'The Story of Little Suck-a-Thumb', whose thumbs are cut off to break his habit, (9:22) "Die sind alle beide fort!" (rough translation: "Which is still the case."),¹⁵² we hear many changes in vocal characterisation; it starts in a *bel canto* sob tone, but with less exact articulation in pitching (which is very subtle and would indicate to me as a personal choice by Wilson, herself), as in a child's voice. The last word is particularly coloured with subtle vocal characterisation: "Fo-" starts with a trill and an accent on Bb4 descending to A4 on "-or", and should end on an unvoiced "-t", but Wilson actually sings a schwa sound, going up a perfect fourth to D5. This painting / characterisation of a single word showcases Wilson's talent for dramatic emphasis, in co-creation with the composer. The piece is full of vocal character shifts, as between the Narrator and Robert, who takes no heed of the warning not to play outside in a storm, to "his doom".¹⁵³ At (10:31), the Narrator's voice in *bel canto* says, "Robert aber dachte" ("Robert, however, thought,"), and we hear his voice respond petulantly, "Nein". ("No").¹⁵⁴ Wilson has changed the timbre of her voice to sound childish, using a resonant *twang* quality.¹⁵⁵ The most dramatic use of *Sprechstimme*, with Wilson's maniacal laughter (surely, her own interpretation), occurs at the end of the piece at

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ See Glossary.

¹⁵¹ Hoffmann (1900)

¹⁵² Hoffmann (1900)

¹⁵³ Griffin Music (2013).

¹⁵⁴ Hoffman, H (1900) 'Die Geschichte vom fliegende Robert'. *Der Struwwelpeter: oder lustige Geschichten und drollige Bilder für Kinder von 3-6 Jahren*. Frankfurt am Main: Literarische Anstalt von Rutten & Loning. Trans. Furness, Annis Lee (?).

http://germanstories.vcu.edu/struwwel/robert_dual.html, viewed 10 Jan 2016.

¹⁵⁵ See Glossary.

(15:57), which bringing out the title '*Furchtbare Märchen*' with dramatic leaps in the declamatory singing style.

In listening to *Furchtbare Märchen*, it is easy to hear the influence of *Sprechstimme*, *bel canto* singing, and vocal characterisation of the naughty children, as well as the use of the range of the voice throughout, with dramatic uses of highs and lows. To create vocal characterisation, she says, "I draw on other methods of singing to achieve the soundscape I am seeking, such as the Estill method and the use of sob, twang, and speech qualities over and above my operatic one".¹⁵⁶ Thus, we can hear the influence of the singer as co-creator of the music in the creative process, as well as in performance in the dramatisation using the voice.

In working with composer/librettist/musical director/producer Tim Benjamin in 2014 on his new opera *Madame X*, Wilson played the lead role of Lady Brannoch. Having been cast after the piece was written, she was able only to make minor requests for changes, for example, when a very low *tessitura* of the voice was scored, Wilson asked for the accompaniment to be lowered in volume for better balance against a less resonant area of her range. Throughout, there were minor requests like this, and, to highlight a collaborative skill, Wilson emphasised to me the importance of familiarising the composer with the voice in a pragmatic way. She did this throughout the rehearsal period for Lady Brannoch, making change requests respectfully of the composer's work, with clear explanations regarding the limitations of the voice.

Wilson goes on to describe the process for co-creating Lady Brannoch:

In the case of *Madame X*, I sent an email describing the different facets of my voice and where it is/isn't comfortable. Tim then sent out a draft score, and I systematically went through it and made about ten slight changes to the notes and, in the case of a vowel anomaly, a word - or moreover where the word had been set - according to the *tessitura*, all the while explaining why I was asking for the change to be made.

Subsequently, the composer commissioned Wilson to work on his new one-woman opera piece 'Silent Jack'. As she was the commissioned performer, rather than simply cast in an existing role, Wilson says she felt she "had more leverage" than she had in *Madame X* to make more creative, compositional and performative

¹⁵⁶ Wilson, T (2015). (See Glossary.)

suggestions with Benjamin, essentially becoming even more of a co-creator in the process. Wilson explained the collaborative process for 'Silent Jack', beginning with careful reading of the libretto to "get a sense of storyline". Working with a draft of the music, she sang for the composer in a workshop situation:

When it came to 'Silent Jack', I reminded Tim again of my voice, its abilities etc., suggesting some features that could potentially be written musically, both to use my voice and the character. He then sent the first ten pages electronically. I could see quickly that his writing made wonderful use of word painting. We then met for a two-day workshop session. Before arriving he had all but finished the score. We looked at it on Sibelius, and I made some immediate observations.

For example, initially, the piece, like *Madame X*, was written in a mostly low range. After discussion, the collaborators chose specific low notes to bring out the fact that victims would have assumed Silent Jack was a man, but Wilson requested that the rest of the piece use a wider range to give more expressivity to the vocal line. She workshopped these elements and also brought in *Sprechstimme* with an element of "shouting, then singing". After the character is shot, she reminisces about her past, while dying. Instead of singing notes, Wilson suggested a wailed *Sprechstimme*. Further, the word, "Hah!" appeared just once in the text and score, but Wilson thought the gesture could be repeated to "show a proverbial finger to the society in which [Silent Jack] lived"; Wilson suggested an "ugly" vocal colour, presumably making use of *twang*. After these discussions, the process continued:

He then had time to orchestrate it on the first evening, and the next development was to, again, see the score on Sibelius, but this time with the orchestral sounds. This then helped me to understand what would and wouldn't work for the voice: for example, I pointed out that using all five instruments while I was singing at the lower end of the register would swamp the voice.

Wilson also asked for some textual changes and for slower tempi on some passages partly for technical ease, but also, "Because the tempi were too fast for the pathos to come across". She clearly thinks about the communication of the character to the audience from a vocal but also from an acting point of view, as suggested by Stanislavski, which supports her being a co-creator of the character of Silent Jack. Wilson continues with the process:

The next step was to take the completed score to my vocal teacher, where we systematically worked through it, checking that everything written (once we ensured I was singing it correctly) would be either vocally healthy, or indeed, vocally sustainable for around forty minutes. [The composer] agreed to most of the changes, and we made a compromise on some points, as I understood that it may affect the integrity of the melody/harmonic structure of that section.

Wilson then mentions a very significant element of collaborating on new works in a simple line: “Since Tim sent out both a midi orchestral version with and without the vocal line on it, I didn’t require a pianist to go through it”. Midi realisations are essential for learning new works where financial (and time) constraints limit rehearsal time, and which has become common practice in working with newer works.¹⁵⁷ I verified this personally in the rehearsal/creation process of most of the portfolio works as participant observer, which I will discuss at the end of the section (bar *Green Angel*, whose score was hand-written).

An element a singing performer must consider is the way the costume works to bring out the character without affecting the vocal performance:

When looking at this character, given that she is dressed up as a highway man, I quickly checked on the costume I will be wearing and emphasised [to the composer/producer], for ease of movement around the stage and freedom to sing technically well, that it was not an overly heavy coat. There has to be due attention given to the fact that I will be singing in London at the end of July and simply wouldn’t survive an opera if I were to be layered up! A mask may well be suggested, however, again, I will have to be mindful of when and how I use it, as it may well impede my visual on the conductor and it could create a very different resonance world for me.

Wilson also highlights another musical/costume element, saying, “I have suggested the use of spurs to create another percussive sound with the orchestral palette”.

Throughout Wilson’s process in working with Tim Benjamin are clear examples of co-composition and co-creation at play in what is akin to the creative process of a devised dance or theatre piece. For example, physical theatre piece *Pool, No*

¹⁵⁷ Elliott (2006), p. 299.

*Water*¹⁵⁸ was devised in a workshopping process between Frantic Assembly and the commissioned writer Mark Ravenhill, according to the ensemble in discussions after their 2005 show I attended. However, it is Mark Ravenhill who is the named author of the play. When asked why this was, the ensemble replied that the final decisions were Ravenhill's, therefore they gave him permission to be the named author, despite their considerable collaborative co-creation.¹⁵⁹ Similarly in music, even with Wilson's extensive compositional input, Tim Benjamin is the named composer. However, the singer will complete the last element of the collaborative creation of the character Silent Jack in Wilson's co-composition of 'Silent Jack' when she embodies the character and communicates its musical and dramatic intentions to an audience on stage in Manchester, June 2015. The final result will be her own interpretation, and the composer will have to leave it in her capable hands (i.e. voice), making it a truly collaborative process.

4.4. Nadine Benjamin (formerly Mortimer-Smith)

Soprano Opera Singer, Contemporary Classical Vocalist, Jazz Singer

This case study is a summary of discussions and interviews undertaken over the 2011-2015 period. When I worked with Nadine Benjamin on Stephen Kilpatrick's *Flight Paths*, we discovered similarities in working style and in our dance and mixed music backgrounds. I will explain this in more detail in the *Flight Paths* chapter in discussion about our collaborative process. However, I was interested in Benjamin's collaborative input into the creation of two operatic roles in the opera project *Naciketa* by Nigel Osborne and Ariel Dorfman, which has been in development since 2010.

After Ariel Dorfman's initiation¹⁶⁰ of the project with composer Nigel Osborne and producer Tina Ellen Lee¹⁶¹ at Opera Circus, the opera's creation process has been collaborative and holistic from its inception. Lee's concept of 'collaborative performance' means that the entire creative collective is part of the creation process.

¹⁵⁸ *Pool (No Water)*. By Mark Ravenhill [with Frantic Assembly]. Directed by Scott Graham and Steven Hoggett. Contact Theatre. Manchester, UK. March 22, 2007.

¹⁵⁹ Frantic Assembly cast and directors Scott Graham and Steven Hoggett. Q & A interview. Manchester. March 22, 2007.

¹⁶⁰ Dorfman, Ariel (01:15) in Golden, Robert (2012) *Naciketa-Fragments From An Indian Journey*. [Film] [Online] <https://vimeo.com/37075708>, viewed 31 May 2015.

¹⁶¹ Lee, Tina Ellen (2015) 'About' [Online] <http://www.tinaellenlee.com/about.html>, viewed 31 May 2015.

This means the collective of librettist Ariel Dorfman, composer Nigel Osborne, the musical and theatre directors, the producer herself and the entire cast, including N. Benjamin, are in attendance in workshops for the creation and editing process. Beginning in 2010 with Dorfman's libretto, the entirety of which being set to music by composer Osborne, the piece was workshopped by the cast over a period of two years (2010-2012). The collective spent hours working through and cutting the material, as "the libretto was too long", after which new libretto and music sections were written to connect and "make coherent" the newly-cut sections.¹⁶² An initial performance took place at the Royal Opera House in 2013¹⁶³ under the direction of Englishwoman Di Sherlock whose main focus was from a presentational perspective; she was interested in the performers' use of the space. After the first performance, the collective came together again to cut and add new sections and characters. N. Benjamin highlighted that workshopping of new works is common practice.

Two years later, the Indian director Neelam Mansingh Chowdhry,¹⁶⁴ who is from a film background, workshopped excerpts with the collective, bringing a more naturalistic, visceral-physical and intimate element to the performance, perhaps due to her film background. N. Benjamin described how, in the Royal Opera House performance, the male title character Naciketa had simply watched her as prostitute Swaharaga; in this new workshop, she was asked to be very physical with Naciketa, simulating sex with the other performer. Physicality was very important in this version, to which N. Benjamin brought her dance background.

N. Benjamin discussed her personal creative process with composer Nigel Osborne in the collaborative creation of two characters Swaharaga, whom she later took on, and Alicia, a role written for Benjamin herself. Her first step, she says, was to peruse the libretto and then to the music to discover what she could about the character and the subtext. Swaharaga's text dealt with pain and trauma, and her music was highly rhythmical with no lyrical lines. In contrast, Alicia's text also dealt with pain but from a

¹⁶² Benjamin, N. (2011-2015).

¹⁶³ Parut (2013) 'Naciketa the Opera' blog post. [Online] <http://naciketas-press.com/index.php/naciketas-lit-art/10-nachiketa-the-opera>, viewed 31 May 2015.

¹⁶⁴ Kothari, Sunil (2014) 'Her limitless powers.' *Deccan Herald*. [Online] <http://www.deccanherald.com/content/416502/her-limitless-powers.html>, viewed 22 June 2015.

place of “joy and wonder”;¹⁶⁵ her music, while highly complex rhythmically, featured lyrical melodic lines. (She is also blind, which was an interesting exploration for the singer.) As Swaharaga’s music was too low for her lyric soprano range, originally written for a mezzo-contralto voice, Osborne took the relevant sections up a third at N. Benjamin’s request. As collaborator, Benjamin felt respected and that she could work through the other, still slightly low sections with grace, to respect the composer’s wishes.

4.5. Vocalist-Composers

Composer-Performers who subvert the (often male) composer’s hegemony include Diamanda Galás, Cathy Berberian who composed her comic-book inspired *Stripsody*, Joan La Barbara, and Meredith Monk.

4.5.1. Diamanda Galás

vocal composer, singing/composing collaborator, performance artist

Susan McClary (1991) describes Diamanda Galás as “a woman composer who produces extraordinary simulations of feminine rage... enact[ing] her pieces on her own body”.¹⁶⁶ Rather than taking on the projections of male composers’ fears and fantasies of transgression, McClary says, Galás “enacts the rage of the madwoman for purposes of protesting genuine atrocities: the treatment of the Greek junta, attitudes toward victims of AIDS”. She does this through the body, as well as through her vocal performances, composing pieces using her repertoire of extended vocal techniques. These include “the ululation of traditional Mediterranean keening”, which I will discuss in the *ELEGEIA* chapter, as well as nontraditional human repertoire of “whispers, shrieks, and moans”.¹⁶⁷ In her daring embodiment and vocal performance, McClary declares that Galás “heralds a new moment in the history of musical representation”.¹⁶⁸ In analysing Galás’s (1994)¹⁶⁹ performance of ‘Skóto seme’, I will

¹⁶⁵ Benjamin, N. (2011-2015).

¹⁶⁶ McClary (1991), p. 110.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ McClary (1991), p. 111.

¹⁶⁹ Sansfutur (2008). *Diamanda Galás & John Paul Jones - Skóto seme (live 1994) on The Jon Stewart Show*, MTV. [Online] <https://youtu.be/f0AljnQ8t30>, last accessed 17 May 2015.

discuss her vocal techniques and physical portrayal of the female protagonist, as a heightened version of herself.

Galás' 'Skótoseme' features extensive use of *Amannes*,¹⁷⁰ or Greek lamentation singing. She uses an open nasal port¹⁷¹ and high volumes to put across the passion of her feelings in this piece, the translation of the title being 'Kill Me'. This is a collaboration between Galás and bassist John Paul Jones, from the album *The Sporting Life*.¹⁷² What is notable is that Galás's performance pieces always come from an expression of a strong emotion. In this case, she is embodying the female protagonist because her performance (and the creation of the piece) comes from this strong emotion based not only on spectacle and virtuosity, but from a personal tragedy. She wrote this song after she lost her brother to AIDS.¹⁷³ I assert that the embodiment on stage of a female protagonist must include an emotional connection with the personal, intimate, and visceral. In Galás's case, an emotional reference point could be the loss of her brother to AIDS, the connection to which she can bring to on stage performances, deepening the audience's experience of a lived or embodied emotion.

Her commitment on stage to communication of this strong emotion comes across in her strong physical stance, her intense gaze, and use of a range of extended vocal techniques, some of which sound like the precursors to screamo¹⁷⁴ and are clearly influenced by rock distortion. She also uses a *makam saba* scale¹⁷⁵ (G3 - Ad3 (slightly lower than Ab3) - B3 - C4 - D4 - Eb - F4 - G4) over a G pedal note but with much use of liminal notes, which could be called eighth-tones, for example, giving the impression of being between pitches. She hybridises and fuses the Greek cultural vocal form of *Amannes* singing, which I reference in *ELEGEIA* (for Anna), with rock vocal distortion,¹⁷⁶ guitar imitation, animal-like noises (comments on the YouTube

¹⁷⁰ Carlos Galás (Uploaded on Aug 24, 2010) *Diamanda Galás: Entrevista a Diamanda Galás (traducción) (interview with DG, translation)* [Online] https://youtu.be/P16n_dBUVqY, viewed 17 May 2015. (See Glossary.)

¹⁷¹ See Glossary.

¹⁷² Galás, Diamanda and John Paul Jones (1994) *The Sporting Life*, JP Jones, prod. [CD] London: Mute Records.

¹⁷³ Turner (2008).

¹⁷⁴ See Glossary.

¹⁷⁵ See *ELEGEIA* chapter.

¹⁷⁶ See Glossary.

video refer to monkey and dolphin sounds),¹⁷⁷ operatic singing and rap.¹⁷⁸ This piece and its performance is a prime example of Greek and Western cultural and musical fusion of vocal styles, with extended techniques to put across a strong emotion, upon which *ELEGEIA* builds, and Galás's emotionally-committed, visceral physical presence on stage serves as a prime example of the female protagonist. (**Appendix 4.**)

4.5.2. Joan La Barbara

vocal composer (for herself) and singing/composing collaborator

Recognised for her vocal interpretations by major contemporary composers from Morton Feldman to John Cage with whom she has collaborated, La Barbara has also composed dramatic vocal compositions using her own explorations into extended sounds.¹⁷⁹ Her solo voice pieces using layering made this listener set everything else down in order to listen fully; otherwise, the sound becomes overwhelming with any other sensory input. Upon initial hearing of 'ShadowSong' (1979), from *Soundpainting*, for example, one presumes there is electronic treatment of the voice because of the layering effects used throughout, but as La Barbara says, "All of the vocal sounds on this CD were recorded in real time with no electronic manipulation and consist of both traditional and 'extended' vocal techniques I have layered over the past twenty years. While the sounds are layered to create various textures, they remain natural".¹⁸⁰ In describing the piece, she says,

ShadowSong is a psychological study, a threshold experience where concentration is interrupted by shadows at the outer edges of vision and memories on the periphery of thought. These take the form of indistinguishable words floating by and ominous melodies. These shadow-memories compound with resolute persistence until one confronts the decision to go into the shadows or resist them.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁷ Sansfutur (2008).

¹⁷⁸ See **Appendix 4.** for more detailed breakdown of vocal sounds Galás uses in this video.

¹⁷⁹ Cowley (2009) p. 26.

¹⁸⁰ La Barbara, Joan (2015) Notes on *Soundpaintings* album, 1991. [Online]

<http://www.discogs.com/Joan-La-Barbara-Sound-Paintings/release/416328>, viewed 28 May 2015.

¹⁸¹ La Barbara, Joan (1991) 'Album notes on "ShadowSong", 1979. *Soundpaintings* album. [Online] <http://www.lovely.com/albumnotes/notes3001.html>, viewed 28 May 2015.

La Barbara's stimuli and references (like Meredith Monk's – see below) seem to be very visual - indeed, she often references painting¹⁸² when discussing her work, and even in the title of the above album. She was very affected by Rothko's paintings while playing at Houston's Rothko Chapel with Steve Reich's ensemble in 1973, saying:

"I was thunderstruck by the paintings and the atmosphere," she recalls. "Years later, I did a lot of research into Mark Rothko's work, the idea of monochromatic painting and layers upon layers of paint with God knows what else in the mix. The outcome was my composition *ROTHKO*, which I premiered in the Chapel in 1986. It's an octagonal space that has 14 paintings arranged within it. I prerecorded microtonal and multiphonic vocal washes, added bowed piano and projected those sounds through eight separate channels. Another layer was performed live. A different mix came from each of the speakers. I wanted members of the audience to experience the sound as they experienced the paintings - differently according to their position in the room".¹⁸³

While there are live vocals with tape in *ROTHKO* (1986), and 'ShadowSong' is tape only and was created before her extensive research into the famous painter, the strong washes of sound evoke the bold layered colours of his painting style, which La Barbara said had struck her so much. As a listener I experience music visually in my mind (synaesthesia), which is how I will create a verbal breakdown of the major sections of 'ShadowSong', including also the strong element of spacialisation in the recording and layering process. (See **Appendix 5**.)

She is pure sound for sound's sake, rather than having visual signifiers, though this listener's brain fills in the imagined visual stimulation due to a tendency towards synaesthesia.¹⁸⁴ This is how I developed my initial score for *Vocalise/Vocal Wheeze*,¹⁸⁵ using the images my brain created for the sounds I was exploring. Similarly, in *ELEGEIA* (for Anna), the graphic shapes and textures I was using indicated how my brain was visually interpreting the sounds I was hearing while transposing the fixed-medium/tape part created electro-acoustically from my recorded improvisations. (The initial result was very similar to Trevor Wishart's

¹⁸² Cowley (2009) p. 29.

¹⁸³ Joan La Barbara quoted in Cowley (2009) p. 29.

¹⁸⁴ Synesthesia. (n.d.) *American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fifth Edition*. (2011). [Online] <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/synesthesia>, Retrieved January 10 2016.

¹⁸⁵ See **Appendix 3**.

Anticredos score.)¹⁸⁶ Further, I used a visual stimulus to evoke the vocal emotion and sound world that became *ELEGEIA* in recording of excerpts from graphic novel *100 Months*, with its strong blood red, black and white images. *ELEGEIA* is pure sound but makes use of emotion signallers, like a tilted larynx (cry/moan).¹⁸⁷ Also, my live performance contains facial expression that indicates mourning, as well as black clothing to further clarify the point, which I will discuss in the relevant chapter.

Regarding collaboration, La Barbara's model varies from project to project, but she has worked collaboratively with many composers, from Cage to Feldman, and says:

Some composers have used certain aspects of my extended technique vocabulary... Others shy away because they feel that vocabulary is so particularly identifiable with me, although they still want to utilise my expertise. That's ok. I'm willing to share my vocabulary, but I'm also willing to approach a new idea and try to bring my knowledge and curiosity to that situation, to help the composer realise what she or he wants to do. In return, I've learnt compositional tools by apprenticing, essentially, with each of the composers I've worked with.¹⁸⁸

4.5.3. Meredith Monk

American 'maverick' composer

In Monk's *Turtle Songs*¹⁸⁹ the repetitive nature of the music gives a ritualistic feel and a tendency for this listener to go into trance, like trance elements that occurred in the creation of *ELEGEIA*. It is completely immersive, 28 minutes long, with the same *ostinato* rhythm and organ accompaniment throughout. Polyrhythmic shifts happen in the vocal line and in the dance movement. Broyles (2004) says about Monk:

...if Meredith Monk is to be compared with any composer, it would be Harry Partch. Both create in their character and themes archetypes, and in doing so have sought to capture a primal, ritualistic, theatrical experience in their work that looks back to a much earlier time. Both believe in a directness of emotional communication through their music, unencumbered by theories and philosophies of the past several hundred years. Both use musical materials that go far beyond the twelve notes of the tempered scale. Both created their own unique musical instruments, Partch literally building his as a carpenter,

¹⁸⁶ Wishart (1996), p. 282.

¹⁸⁷ See Glossary.

¹⁸⁸ Joan La Barbara quoted in Cowley (2009) p. 26.

¹⁸⁹ mmonkhouse (Published on Aug 7, 2014) *Meredith Monk - Turtle Dreams (shot by Ping Chong), fixed audio*. [Online] <https://youtu.be/FBIrRUVfo0>, viewed 28 May 2015.

Monk through discovery and experimentation with her own voice. And most important, both believe in a complete fusion of the aural and the visual.¹⁹⁰

Working on Monk's highly rhythmic vocal / movement / ritual dance-music-theatre piece *A Celebration Service* in Budapest in 2003 (Monk's work has always been difficult to categorise.),¹⁹¹ opened my mind to a new type of vocal-musical expression that seemed to follow on from my piece *Woman on a Box*.¹⁹² There, I had appropriated the Catholic *Ave Maria* text for Gounod/Bach's musical setting, and the piece relied on the new text for the audience's understanding. Monk's *A Celebration Service* represented a new type of work that had rhythmical and emotive qualities without words, but rather sets of language-like sounds. The ritualistic sound that came from the highly repetitive, interlocking parts in this ensemble piece¹⁹³ created a highly emotional charge, certainly in the performers. Broyles (2004) describes Monk's non-verbal use of the voice as exceedingly effective in being affective:

In stripping the voice of its common role, support of words, to present pure sounds, [Monk's] music resides in the interstices between pure sound and articulated language. Unencumbered by discourse, context, or intellectual overlay, the sounds retain a razor-sharp emotional directness. Possibly for that reason her music has a mythic dimension that recalls a time when language itself was just emerging in the human species...The very primal qualities that Monk sought, however, create their own limits. In stripping away externals such as text, in reducing accompaniment to a minimum, and in presenting only her voice, Monk spectacularly attained her desired results, to present directly and powerfully the most fundamental primordial emotions.¹⁹⁴

I believe this honest presentation of "the most fundamental primordial emotions" is part and parcel of the female protagonist in new works. This was the intention of creating an emotive work without words (or with very few, Hungarian words) to appear in the portfolio. *ELEGEIA* (for Anna) was a sound exploration, but also an exploration of these "most fundamental primordial emotions".

¹⁹⁰ Broyles (2004), p. 334.

¹⁹¹ Broyles (2004), p. 326, 330.

¹⁹² See **Appendix 1. Video 1.** for *Woman on a Box*.

¹⁹³ Excerpts, such as 'Fields and Clouds' (0:58-1:52) and 'Panda Chant II' (1:53-3:27) can be heard online: mmonkhouse (Uploaded on Jan 16, 2012) *Meredith Monk - Meredith Monk & Vocal Ensemble with Montclair State University Singers*. [Online] <https://youtu.be/490pMcDbFE4>, viewed 28 May 2015.

¹⁹⁴ Broyles (2004), p. 332.

ELEGEIA (for Anna) was influenced by my exposure to works by Meredith Monk, the extreme and emotive quality of Diamanda Galás's vocals in pieces that come from an emotional stimulus, as well as a purely sonic enquiry into what extended vocal sounds and techniques could make up a piece using layering, as does Joan La Barbara. Cathy Berberian's tongue-in-cheek *Stripsody*, based on comic book references acting as notation, as well as Wishart's *Anticredos*, allowed me to trust my synaesthetic approach to notation for *ELEGEIA*. The connection to emotion within both *ELEGEIA* (for Anna) and lyrical piece *to the wider ocean* by Christine McCombe, with my collaboration on layered image and sound within the videos, is essential for presenting and embodying (vocally and physically) the female protagonist in a true light. None of these female composer-performers can be boxed into easy categories, and they inspire my own work of exploring a range of expressive vocal and physical qualities.

Finally, studying the Case Studies and taking part in this research enquiry allowed me to apply learning to my own practice of performance. 'Participant observation' is a term used in sociology to describe a way to collect qualitative research, which Bodgan (1973) describes as data which is rich in description, understanding and detail but not subject to quantitative procedures",¹⁹⁵ which is the kind of learning one acquires while participating in performance work. Zahle (2012) describes four types of observations, the second of which seems the most relevant for collecting qualitative data with regard to learning in the arts:

Type 2 observations: The social scientist may make observations of competent performers' actions and interactions with other individuals and their surroundings. An action carried out by a competent performer is suggestive as to how it is appropriate and/or effective to act.¹⁹⁶

In participating in works with soprano Nadine Benjamin (formerly Mortimer-Smith) in *Flight Paths* and Meredith Monk, in *A Celebration Service*, I was able to study the working practices of the two artists in terms of collaborative skills. For example, I learned about Benjamin's experience in 'workshopping' material and working with various directors and composer Nigel Osborne to flexibly manage her own

¹⁹⁵ Bodgan (1973), p. 302.

¹⁹⁶ Zahle (2012), p. 57.

performance in *Naciketa*. This helped me see how to set, in a diplomatic and professional way, appropriate boundaries during a collaborative rehearsal process, such as in *ELEGEIA*, and in *Flight Paths*, where I negotiated effectively with the director to create a rehearsal timetable that would be time efficient, allow for vocal rest for myself and my colleagues, and still achieve the required goals for the rehearsal. From working with Monk, I learnt about the way she and her workshop leaders teach her compositions by ear in a workshop situation, although she does provide transcriptions of her works, as well. I was able to put across these skills in my own teaching workshops, as well as during the rehearsal process for *A Celebration Service*, where I took on a leadership role in guiding less able singers using coaching and conducting.

Chapter Five: *Green Angel*: opera

5.1. Overview

Green Angel opera by Lauren Redhead, libretto by Adam Strickson is a 1.5 hour contemporary opera performed on 19 January 2011 in the Stage@Leeds black box theatre, following a six-day rehearsal period. Part of the creation process was a workshop performance in December 2010, which helped me create the main character Ash/Green as soprano soloist, dancer/choreographer and actor. The storyline is an adaptation of Alice Hoffman's eponymous novella written for teenagers following the 9/11 US terrorist attack and the author's personal battle with cancer,¹⁹⁷ the personal element being important to note in work by women artists, as called for by Pasler.¹⁹⁸ Adapting librettist Adam Strickson uses conventions of Japanese *Noh* theatre and describes the structure of the piece thus:

This adaptation is based on the JO-HA-KYU structure of the fourteenth century Japanese *Noh* plays. *Noh* brings to life one person's inner emotional journey, mirrored by the changing seasons of the year. JO literally means 'opening', HA means 'development' and KYU has the sense of 'fast' or 'climax'. The drama starts slowly, then gradually and smoothly accelerates to an intense peak. In *Green Angel*, the prologue introduces the themes of the piece and JO describes the emotional turmoil of the main character. In HA her feelings are challenged. During and interlude, setting and costume are transformed. KYU is a celebratory dance.¹⁹⁹

The characters are based on archetypes set out in *Noh* theatre: The Old Woman, who begins the play by introducing herself, acts as the foil, known as the *Waki*; Ash / Green is the *Shite*, or protagonist who appears in disguise (as Ash). The two converse in question-answer style, setting out the plot.²⁰⁰ During the JO section, the *Shite* dances, reenacting a prior event through stylised movement,²⁰¹ in this case showing her anger and loss after a fire destroyed her village and family. Finally, she is transformed after several healing encounters with the *Waki* and the *Tsure* (a

¹⁹⁷ Strickson (2011), p. 72.

¹⁹⁸ Pasler (1992), p. 204.

¹⁹⁹ Strickson (2011), programme notes. See **Appendix 7**.

²⁰⁰ Bowers (1952), p. 18.

²⁰¹ Ibid.

follower,²⁰² Diamond in *Green Angel*), returning in her true form as Green. The season has turned from Winter to Spring. In traditional *Noh* theatre, “All the roles are played by men. Men, however, even when playing female roles, speak in their natural voices. Women, demons, and ghosts are invariably masked”.²⁰³ In contrast, actors of corresponding gender play all the characters in *Green Angel*, a story that centres around the female protagonist Ash (later Green). In other words, rather than acting as foil for the male characters, as in *Noh*, Strickson’s adaptation follows Ash’s emotional journey to transformation and healing, where we hear her voice and watch her turmoil and triumph. (See Synopsis, **Appendix 8.**)



Image 1. The Old Woman gives Ash some birdseed. With mezzo soprano Katherine Jarvis. (*Green Angel*). Photo by Malcolm Johnson, 2011.

What is telling about Ash / Green is that, while she is portrayed within the confines of the *Noh* conventions, her character arc and transformation show her as a fully-human character dealing with loss through the rituals of laying stones for each family member (Section 2a, Entrance of Ash),²⁰⁴ as well as the tattooing of her arms: “I dip

²⁰² Bowers (1952), p. 18.

²⁰³ Bowers (1952), p. 20.

²⁰⁴ Redhead (2011), *Green Angel* score, p. 13.

this pin in black ink, mark my arms with bats and ravens.” (Section 6, Ash Describes her Appearance).²⁰⁵ She then finds her way back to her true self as Green after meeting others like Diamond and the Old Woman, who help lead her to her Spring Dance, her transformation. The importance of this fully-human characterisation of this opera character is in the ability of the audience to relate to her and her circumstance. Composer Lauren Redhead discusses audience response to the opera:

...[T]he link of the Ash’s changing emotions with the [*Noh*] changing seasons... creates the impression that this may... be... merely a metaphorical representation of the changes taking place on behalf of the main character. This particular journey of grief can be considered different and personal for each listener/viewer and yet the journey itself is considered a shared experience outside of time, as exemplified by many of the responses to the audience survey which was conducted.²⁰⁶

I will discuss later in the chapter how I created this fully-human character within the confines of the *Noh* movement traditions, the slow pacing, and the influence of Redhead’s music. While costume also plays an integral part of the presentation of Ash / Green, and influenced my acting and movement choices considerably, I will touch on this element briefly in the above contexts.

5.2. Research Context

The character arc of the female protagonist will be discussed, looking at movement characterisation, influenced by *Noh* theatre and Modern / Contemporary dance, as well as the vocal techniques used within the opera, including *Sprechstimme*, *Sprechgesang*, pitched speech (called psalm singing in the score) and non-vibrato singing, with reference to Schoenberg’s *Pierrot Lunaire*. The collaborative elements between myself as performer-choreographer and the creators, composer Lauren Redhead and librettist Adam Strickson, which consist mainly of dialogue during the rehearsal process, will be discussed in brief, with conclusions about how the performance and collaborative process have influenced later works in the portfolio.

²⁰⁵ Ibid, p. 36.

²⁰⁶ Redhead (2011) p. 112.

5.2.1. Vocal Qualities, Techniques / Musical Collaboration via Notation and Rehearsal Discussion

Wilkins (2006) explains the evolution of vocal techniques for new works:

While many modern composers still use the *bel canto* style, others have used the extended vocal techniques developed by enterprising singers, such as Dorothy Dorow, Mary Thomas, Jane Manning, Cathy Berberian, Roy Hart, and Linda Hurst, to name a few... [The composer's] choice will depend on the requirements of [her] chosen text, as well as the preferences of the particular singer.²⁰⁷

Green Angel similarly features a range of vocal techniques explored in the Contemporary Classical repertoire. Most notably, Arnold Schoenberg's vocal quality developed for *Pierrot Lunaire* (1912), a vocal style which was later called *Sprechstimme*.²⁰⁸ In this case, the mix of vocal qualities and techniques were chosen by the composer Lauren Redhead, who defines the techniques she requires for *Green Angel* in the score's key. See **Figure 1.** below.

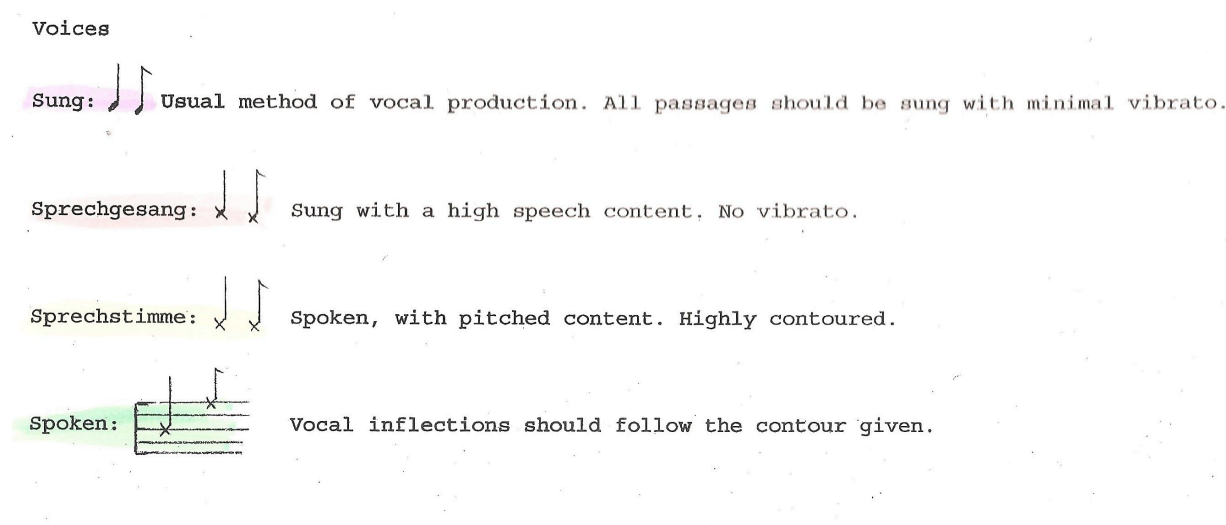


Figure 1. *Green Angel* score key for Voices, vocal qualities.²⁰⁹

These shifts were very subtly different and sometimes inconsistent within the score. For example, it could be argued that *Sprechstimme* and *Sprechgesang* are one and

²⁰⁷ Wilkins (2006), p.200.

²⁰⁸ See Glossary.

²⁰⁹ Redhead (2011) *Green Angel* score, fourth page, no pagination.

[illegible]

Interestingly, the above is notated, according to the composer's key, with "sung" quality, but with the "psalm singing" indication, hence my highlighting of the vocal line

²¹² Elliott (2006), p. 293.

36: Ash remembers her friend

Handwritten musical score for "The House of the Living Dead" by The Residents. The score is for a full ensemble and includes parts for Ash Performer, Ash Ensemble, Bcl, Perc, Acc, and Vco. The lyrics are: "she was my friend her voice like leaves - Now I live here in this half burnt house, close to her, close to her, close to her. special friend best friend". The score features various musical notations including dynamics (mp, mf, mfz, mfz), articulation (accents, slurs), and performance instructions (e.g., "with recorder", "with cello bow", "with ocarina, as before"). The score is written on a single system with multiple staves. The lyrics are written in pink highlighter. The score is numbered 25 in the bottom right corner.

These inconsistencies in the score required some discussion and clarification between the composer and myself. They also left considerable room for personal interpretation. My performance of the above section can be heard on the **Video** (13:43-14:05).²¹⁴

In order to work out the score of a play, we had to break it up into small units... The technique of division is comparatively simple: What is the core [kernel].... Without which it cannot exist?... [The term unit] stands for its

214 See Appendix 1. Video 3.

essential quality. To obtain it you must subject the unit to a process of crystallization... The right name which crystallizes the essence of a unit, discovers its fundamental objective.²¹⁵

Ash is full of grief and longing, with rapidly shifting moods. She describes a “special friend” who, it becomes clear later, is a reference to herself before the fire (as Green). The vocal qualities chosen by Redhead indicate this dissociation from and fluctuation in and out of a variety of emotions, which shift during her quest journey. On pages 30-31, for example, Ash’s lines fluctuate between *Sprechgesang*, spoken, sung, and *Sprechstimme*:

Handwritten musical score for "Green Angel" on page 30. The score is for two parts: "Ash Performer" and "Ash Ensemble". The lyrics are written below the musical notation. The score includes various vocal markings such as "sprechgesang", "spoken", "sung", "sprechstimme", "mf", "mp", "p", "s", "m2", "m2+", and "m2-4". There are also handwritten notes in the margins, including "loosen tongue", "like telling a story to children", "Ash Ensemble mix", and "Ensemble #33-34". The page number "30" is written in the top right corner.

HA OF JO
36 Ash celebrates Green's family

[1-60-72]

sprechgesang mf spoken mp sung mp sprechgesang mf spoken s

Ash Performer
I sleep in her house where sparks cross'd the river and blacked out memories her sweet voice'd mother then gardeners' secrets

Ash Ensemble
so far a-way, so far a-way

like telling a story to children

sprechstimme mf p sung mp sprechgesang spoken p

Ash Performer
like vinegar on roses to chase away beetles' blacked out memories her strong father carried heavy crates and brushed away her tears

Ash Ensemble
so far a-way, so far a-way

Ensemble #33-34

31

Figure 4. *Green Angel* score, page 30 showing vocal technique changes, which I highlighted for quick reference.

The score above has clear rhythmic indications but no indication of the shifting time signatures, which I wrote in for myself as clarification. Time signatures would have been helpful for quicker reference in rehearsal, especially with concentration on the challenging shifts of voice quality, a consideration for future collaborations. This

²¹⁵ Stanislavski (1924/1990) pp. 114-115.

passage can be heard on the **Video** (16:05-17:33).²¹⁶ **Figure 5.** also shows several quick changes between the above techniques:

The image shows a handwritten musical score for 'Green Angel' on page 38. The score is written on a grid with musical notation and includes various performance instructions and vocal techniques. The score is divided into sections labeled 7 and 8. Section 7 is titled '7 and 8 Clog dance; Ash cannot continue dance' and includes a tempo marking 'J=48-60' and a 'slow' instruction. The lyrics for section 7 are 'Nails in my boots' and 'Blood and ink, blood and ink'. Section 8 is titled '8' and includes a tempo marking 'J=72-84' and a 'CONTRAST' instruction. The lyrics for section 8 are 'why am I the one who is alive?', 'why did I survive?', 'I would rather sleep (die)', 'No-one comes home', 'Sleep and dream of the world as it was', 'sorrow in the mind', 'Grief in the trees', 'Anger', 'moles claws of my hands', 'darkness', 'where once there was patience', 'Black', 'where once there was green', and 'anguish'. The score includes various vocal techniques such as 'singing', 'sprechgesang', 'spoken', and 'sung'. There are also performance instructions like 'long pause whilst perc and bel begin, repeat for at least 30" then sing the text below', 'segue after 6 min Ash performer finishes "Nails in my boots"', 'I go back to house ensemble p. 39-40', 'END Act 1', and '38'. The score is written in a mix of black and red ink, with some words highlighted in pink and green.

Figure 5. Green Angel score, page 38 with coloured text highlighting vocal technique changes.

While challenging, these vocal shifts were helpful in characterising Ash's emotional upheaval in performance. In addition to vocal quality, I added pained facial expression and crouching body movement to complement Ash's despair and survivor's guilt, which can be observed on the **Video** (21:02-22:38).²¹⁷ Extreme *tessitura* was also used in the score to show emotional upheaval, for example in the below passage, **Figure 6.**, which the composer verbally²¹⁸ requested I sing in a strained vocal quality to convey Ash's emotional state:

²¹⁶ See **Appendix 1. Video 3.**

²¹⁷ See **Appendix 1. Video 3.**

²¹⁸ The score notation only indicates sung pitches, rather than vocal quality required, which the composer clarified in rehearsal.

HA OF JO
 Sb: Ash celebrates Green's family

Handwritten notes and musical score for Figure 6:

Tempo/Style: $\text{♩} = 40$ *slow!*

Ash Performer:

Dynamic markings: *mp*, *p*, *pp*, *ppp*

Lyrics: Bird seed, Bird seed, Bird seed I can't eat bird seed

Performance instruction: wait for silence

Ash Ensemble:

Dynamic markings: *mp*, *p*, *pp*, *ppp*

Lyrics: Bird seed Bird seed Bird seed bird seed

Performance instruction: *Sprechgesang*

Old Woman:

Lyrics: (leave) From off stage: *mp* Bird seed bird seed

Handwritten notes:

- How birdseed STILLNESS I watch @ moving*
- strained / withheld scream screech!*

Page number: 35

Figure 6. *Green Angel* score, p. 35 showing high *tessitura* with vocal quality directions from the composer written in by the performer.

Elliott's (2006) assertion that collaborative composer-performer discussion in rehearsals can be essential for clarification is exemplified here, as no indication is given in the score about vocal quality. The strained vocal quality, notated as "sung", can be heard in the **Video** (18:21-18:39). The use of high *tessitura* with a breathy, strained quality can also be heard at **Video** (14:48-16:02) when Ash describes her 'Green' self, before the fire.²¹⁹

The particular mix of vocal techniques in the *Green Angel* score and as indicated in discussion could be said to fit into the genre of extended vocal techniques, especially in the strained vocal quality Redhead requested for sung or *Sprechgesang*/"psalm singing" sections, as above. They certainly contrast with the traditional operatic *bel canto* quality with lyrical melodic lines and clear vocal tone that can be heard in other pieces in the portfolio, such as *Flight Paths*. They served to set the scene for the characterisation of an extremely emotionally volatile character in Ash. Her

²¹⁹ See **Appendix 1. Video 3.**

transformation into and reemergence in the second half²²⁰ as Green, therefore, is indicated in the vocal qualities of psalm singing a bit closer to traditional Classical technique, but with little to no vibrato, as requested by the composer in the score's key.²²¹ She also chooses a much more central part of the soprano range, which provides clarity of text and indicates a sense of emotional calm. Her changes between vocal qualities through to the end of the piece is much less rapid, with shifts taking place between phrases of music, rather than within one phrase. Also, there are fewer forays into *Sprechgesang*, *Sprechstimme* and spoken text, favouring something closer to *bel canto*. This contrasting vocal treatment furthers the sense of calm and shows Ash's transformation into Green, a person who sees hope for the future. See **Figure 7.**, below.

Figure 7. *Green Angel* score, page 79 shows midrange singing with less rapid shifting between vocal styles.

²²⁰ Score indication for Act III., 18b. The black leaves are green.

JO OF KYM
19: Last stones [$\text{♩} = \sim 84$]

Green Performer

Sung
spoken
 m^3
sung
spoken
sung
f p5 m7

A last stone for my fa-ther who sang like the spinggles in the trees. A last stone for my mother who had such gen-tle hands.

Ensemble follow GREEN after initial cue

Bcl

molto mb
stap tongs

Perc

marimbas
flam.
bd
gongs

f mf

wait for silence

Acc

p m mp

Vco

behind bridge arco

f mf

85

When Ash's transformation and healing take place, the composer's use of vocal style shifts becomes much less rapid, giving a feeling of greater serenity. My performance of this can be observed on the video (**Appendix 1. Video 3.** 58:20-59:12).²²²

70

5.2.2. Collaborative Character Creation in Rehearsal (Movement)

The director/librettist Adam Strickson gave clear blocking instructions between pieces, while I co-created the dance choreography with movement coach Jorge Balça for Ash's Angry Dance²²³ in the first half, the Spuggie (bird) Dance²²⁴ (**Appendix 1. Video 3. 25:33-26:00**) and Green's Spring Dance²²⁵ in Act III, based on the directors' indications. The sung drama required typical *Noh* conventions for movement, as described by Bowers (1952):

Noh is an exceedingly slow and deliberate style of drama. Each step of the foot and each gesture of the hand are carefully measured and stylized [sic]. Maximum economy of gesture and movement and complete restraint characterize [sic] a performance. A step can mean a complete journey; the lifting of the hand, weeping; the merest turn of the head, negation. *Noh* abounds in understatement.²²⁶

With this in mind, Adam Strickson directed my movement to be equally measured and slow. This is particularly noticeable when the Old Woman gives Ash birdseed, see **Appendix 1. Video 3. (17:38-18:50)**, and during the stones ritual where Ash remembers her family, see **Appendix 1. Video 3. (08:40-10:19)**. In contrast, the dance sections, which I co-choreographed or improvised, while stylised, allowed for more freedom, as the character shows her emotional side more clearly. For example, during the angry dance in Section 6 (*KYU* of *JO*, "Ash describes her mood"),²²⁷ the movement I chose was not measured and slow but quickly stamping, angry and frustrated (**Appendix 1. Video 3. 20:38-20:05**). In this sense, the movement broke from the *Noh* restraint.

Another example of dance movement I co-created, which breaks from *Noh* convention, is when Ash returns as transformed into her "true colours"²²⁸ as Green, in the final section *KYU*, Section 18a ("Spring Dance").²²⁹ Here, the movement I choreographed used my Modern Dance training, for example in the flowing upper

²²³ Redhead (2011), score, p. 37.

²²⁴ Redhead (2011), score, p. 43.

²²⁵ Redhead (2011), score, p. 77.

²²⁶ Bowers (1952), p. 21-22.

²²⁷ Redhead (2001) *Green Angel* score, p. 37.

²²⁸ Bowers (1952), p. 18.

²²⁹ Redhead (2011), score, p. 77.

body movement, extended arms and fingers, pointed toes and deep lunges (**Appendix 1. Video 3.** 53:00-54:14) and Hungarian folk dance training, for example in my turns (**Appendix 1. Video 3.**, 52:27); I moved quickly and gracefully, rather than in a slow, stylised manner. See **Appendix 1. Video 3.** (52:17-54:14). The flowing, reaching movement contrasts with Ash's restrained movement in the first half, often crouching (**Appendix 1. Video 3.**, 24:45-25:33 and 28:33-29:15) or slouching (**Appendix 1. Video 3.**, 17:37) and with hands in the shape of claws, for example when Ash tattoos her arms (**Appendix 1. Video 3.**, 19:19-20:05). The dance also functioned here to enable a set change, adding Spring colours in the form of garlands to represent the change of seasons, another *Noh* convention.²³⁰

In addition to text and music, Stanislavski's comment on the importance of costume for an actor is relevant here. The spiky-shouldered, vinyl jacket in khaki green evoked a charred Green, hinting at Ash's previous existence. It also restricted arm movement, which helped me choose the inward, crouching, slouched movement. Ash's wearing of her father's too-large boots brought a sense of trying to remain grounded in a chaotic world and an attachment to the past; walking was heavier in contrast to the second half, where Green appears without shoes or the restrictive jacket. As a singing-dancing performer, the main concern was flexibility of movement, similar to Taylor Wilson's experience in working on 'Silent Jack' (See Case Study). The fabric of the costume was effective for this. Additionally, I requested to add my own green Japanese cotton trouser-skirt, which added more green colour while also working aesthetically for my body shape, as well as showing more of the leg movement in the "Spring Dance". Costume designer Belizma Kelsall and director Adam Strickson conceded. The original costume design, evocative of *Noh* theatre, can be seen in the programme (see **Appendix 7.**).

²³⁰ Bowers (1952).

5.2.3. Challenges and Solutions during the Collaborative Process

5.2.3.1 General

The rehearsal process proved challenging for several reasons. Ash/Green as protagonist is on stage for nearly the entire 1.5 hour performance, which required endurance. The piece was to be memorised but was written as a largely indeterminate²³¹ score. The homogeneity of the sound world throughout the piece made cueing challenging; also, I was to find pitches from pitched percussion, such as gamelan gongs and cowbell, often in different registers and with very different timbres, which was new to me as a singer. Dance choreography and movement in performance with extended vocal techniques called for a ‘triple-threat’²³² performance, making use of my vocal, acting, and dance skills. As it was influenced by *Noh* theatre,²³³ *Green Angel* had no through-line of incidental music to indicate the next scene but was written in discrete episodes. This meant memorisation of the order of episodes, along with difficult pitching between scenes, was required throughout. A solution to the memorisation problem for Act III from Green’s appearance, which required more dance movement, was to place a written scene order into the basket for my reference.

5.2.3.2. Vocal Considerations

On performance day 19 January 2011, the cast were called for a 9 am start for a full rehearsal. Having had little time to recover from the previous night’s rehearsals, the early start meant no time for a vocal warm up, which proved problematic in the long run. The full rehearsal was followed by two performances: a school showing at 12pm and an evening performance at 7:30pm. This meant I spent 4.5 hours on stage in a single day with very little rest between full performances. I sang full voice during each of these performances, with the sung/*Sprechgesang* section²³⁴ in a high *tessitura* (F5-Bb5), the direction from the composer being that each note should be sung

²³¹ For example, Redhead instructs the singer to use “Psalm singing, following roughly the rhythm of speech”, leaving much interpretation to the performer. Redhead (2011), p. 21.

²³² See Glossary.

²³³ Strickson (2011), p. 2.

²³⁴ Section 5a, Ash tells her about the girl. See **Figure 6**.

“equal, short, even durations, each separated”,²³⁵ chosen specifically to achieve a strained vocal sound to mirror the strained emotional state of the character. Librettist Adam Strickson quotes the composer:

In Redhead's scoring of *Green Angel*, at extreme moments of emotion, the register of the two singers playing Ash is pushed beyond their natural ranges, a deliberate act on the part of the composer. In one of our interviews facilitated by Kara McKechnie, she said: “I don't think I necessarily need to have a lot of notes but looking at something that is sort of on the edge is a lot more interesting to me than to stay in the middle and the safe ground. We're talking about how high the singers are pitching, not so they could actually get a clear note but how they would produce the sound of really reaching for that register”.²³⁶

As such, the register is within the soprano range, but the vocal quality requested can be damaging with inexperience and undue preparation (e.g. warm-up). As this scene takes place towards the beginning of the opera, it sets the singer's vocal state for the rest of the opera. Practitioner/researcher of extended vocal techniques Amanda DeBoer (2012), in her study on Ingressive Phonation,²³⁷ strongly urges vocalists and composers to collaborate to create safe, yet effective extended vocal compositions for the voice. While composer Lauren Redhead's *Green Angel* required use of egressive phonation,²³⁸ the breathy quality requested affected me in a similar way to DeBoer's observations in ingressive phonation, namely that “there is increased risk of dehydration and fatigue of the vocal mechanism” and that composers should “consult with a singer or attempt the techniques themselves to gauge what is practical, effect[ive] and safe for the vocalist”.²³⁹

Elliott (2006) strengthens the argument for negotiation in rehearsal with “composers who specifically ask singers to sing straight tones high and/or loud”. In interview with Reich singer Cheryl Bensman, she learnt that the vocalist had been amplified when singing straight-tones, which allowed Bensman to sing “softly to keep her throat from getting tight”. Perhaps a solution would have been to have amplification, or to take soprano Phyllis Bryn-Julson's advice, also from interview: “not singing loud or high

²³⁵ Redhead (2011), p. 27.

²³⁶ Redhead and Strickson, 2010, 20 May quoted in Strickson (2011), p. 88.

²³⁷ Producing vocal sounds on an in-breath. See Glossary.

²³⁸ Producing vocal sounds on an out-breath.

²³⁹ DeBoer (2012), p. 98.

for straight tones and keeping the breath and throat relaxed”, as well as adding “some vibrato to notes above the staff”.²⁴⁰

The strained vocal quality and exhausting performance day did have long-term consequences on my vocal health, my voice retaining a breathy sound for three weeks following the performances. This meant that, when collaborating again with the director/producer in the *Flight Paths* opera,²⁴¹ I was vigilant in setting boundaries about reasonable rehearsal times, taking into account vocal rest and healthy use of the singing voice, taking the cue also from experienced opera singer colleagues Nadine Benjamin (formerly Mortimer-Smith) and Taylor Wilson. It also meant that in future forays into extended vocal techniques, as in *ELEGEIA* with Nikos Stavropoulos, I would work closely with the composer to ensure the chosen sounds were respectful of vocal health considerations, avoiding long-term damage.

5.3. Conclusion

The collaborative creation of a female protagonist on stage took place between librettist Adam Strickson, composer Lauren Redhead, and myself, with costume, set designers and musicians. Together during the collaborative process in the rehearsal period, the composer / musical director clarified vocal qualities, while librettist / director Adam Strickson clarified blocking, movement requirements, *Noh* conventions and meanings of old-fashioned words used throughout the piece. Collaboratively, Elliott (2006) and DeBoer (2012) were considered in evaluating the process, which yielded a very unusual mix of modern and ancient art forms and vocal qualities to create the female protagonist’s quest story of Ash’s transformation to Green. Future work in this portfolio would build on the use of extended vocal techniques and triple threat performance using voice and the acting / dancing body to embody the female protagonist on stage, as well as setting boundaries in the collaborative / rehearsal process to ensure the best performance.

²⁴⁰ Elliott (2006), p. 299.

²⁴¹ The vocal technique required for *Flight Paths* was Classical, meaning the extended technique problem did not come into play, only rehearsal timetabling.

Chapter Six: *Flight Paths*: A chamber opera

6.1. Overview

In *Flight Paths*, all the main characters are female, including the main character Erin, who, with the help of several characters she meets on her journey, goes through a transformative process from tragedy to triumph. These journeys and issues are not uniquely female, but of universal human importance. What is interesting is that they show women as complete characters, important enough to be the sole agents in the unfolding drama. Thematically, *Flight Paths* appeals because it answers the research question/intention of creating and collaborating on work that comes from a female perspective and shows the inner world of a complete person, who happens to be female, rather than filtering that experience through the eyes of the male character or perspective.

In this sense, the story fulfils the criteria set out in what has become known in popular culture as the Bechdel test, which evaluates the way women are portrayed in film, based on their dialogue. Comic artist Alison Bechdel's 1985 comic 'The Rule', in *Dykes to Watch Out For*, set out three rules by which one of the comic characters judged whether a film was worth watching: "One, it has to have at least two women in it, who, two, talk to each other about, three, something besides a man".²⁴² In this way, women are presented as characters, rather than clichés.²⁴³

The same rule can be applied to women characters on stage. I will discuss how the interactions between the women in *Flight Paths* emphasise active lives - as in Spitfire Irene, who "delivered planes, flew them to our brave boys, who flew them into battle" during WWI, who have experienced personal tragedy - as in Vy, who lost her "little granddaughter to cancer... and I do the angel cards. They help me get through it." They discuss their passions, such as music for Linda, the karaoke maven, and nature for bird-watching, sea-diving Ilona. Their conversations are about sharing their personal stories, rather than defining themselves by the men in their lives. It is

²⁴² Bechdel, Alison (1985) 'The Rule'. *Dykes to Watch Out For*. Firebrand Books, in Ulaby, Neda (2008) 'The 'Bechdel Rule,' Defining Pop-Culture Character' [Online] www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=94202522.

²⁴³ Ulaby, Neda (2008) 'The 'Bechdel Rule,' Defining Pop-Culture Character' [Online] <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=94202522>.

precisely these types of role that it is my quest to portray. By performing in *Flight Paths*, I hope to continue to encourage fully-human female characters in new music theatre and opera.

I will also discuss the collaborative process as the performative final co-author *creating* the two new operatic roles of Linda and Ilona through acting, movement and vocal techniques using the stimuli of the libretto by Adam Strickson, the music by composer Stephen Kilpatrick, costume and my own dance and acting skills, as well as in collaboration with my singer colleagues Nadine Benjamin (formerly Mortimer-Smith) as protagonist Erin and Taylor Wilson as Spitfire Irene. The collaboration began from professional and personal relationships with both the librettist Adam Strickson, with whom I had previously worked to create lead character Sophie in *Red Angel* (2010), music by Ayanna Witter-Johnson, and *Green Angel* (2010-2011), music by Lauren Redhead. With composer Stephen Kilpatrick I have been working since 2003 in Hungary and in the UK, for example in *Örök Pillanat*, for electroacoustic fixed medium (tape) and live soprano - a collaboration for which I created the choreography, recorded the vocals for the electroacoustic tape treatment, and performed the vocal element live in Budapest's Millennium Theatre. I performed Kilpatrick's live vocal-tape piece *Boundless Space*²⁴⁴ at the Green Room in Manchester, UK, which I also choreographed and danced. In the main, the vocal technique required for the opera was Classical / Operatic, especially the music of Ilona; while her music was influenced by Folk music, including Hungarian, it was performed in a Classical style to fit the genre, much like Zoltán Kodály's setting of folk song 'Árva vagyok apa nélkül' (Orphaned am I),²⁴⁵ which I performed as part of my postgraduate studies. The Kodály piece's high *tessitura* and fixed notation make a true folk interpretation impossible. By this, I refer to Bartók's assertion that chest singing is the authentic Folk style.²⁴⁶ The fixed notation removes the improvisatory nature of folksong interpretation, which Bartók and Baker (1933) highlight:

Peasant melody is a very elastic material; its external form, being without an essential basis, is unstable even in the case of one and the same individual. When one hears any given melody sung several times in succession by the

²⁴⁴ See **Appendix 1. Video 2.**

²⁴⁵ Kodály, Zoltán (2009) 'Árva vagyok apa nélkül' in *Folksongs: Complete songs for voice and piano.*, CD 3 [CD] Budapest: Hungaroton, HCD 32557-59.

²⁴⁶ Bartók (1981), p. 50.

same person, one will generally notice certain slight alterations in the rhythm, sometimes even... in pitch.²⁴⁷

I will discuss my collaborative creation of Ilona on stage to create a fully-human character using music, movement and costume as reference points for characterisation. Regarding my other character Linda, I will discuss how her two vocal styles help define her character, along with the above performance elements. In the creation of my characters Linda and Ilona in *Flight Paths*, I will refer to Bosma's (1996) position that the performer is actually the final co-author in a collaborative process, having the final say in the way a character is communicated to an audience.

6.2. Collaborative Creation of a Character – *Linda*

6.2.1. Acting, Costume and Dance

Linda's libretto character is a sketch; she is written more as a stereotype than a fully-human character. What we are given in the libretto is that she is a "holidaymaker" from Doncaster who enjoys caravan holidaying in Bridlington, North Yorkshire, drinking beer and singing karaoke, particularly Bette Midler's 'Wind Beneath My Wings', which she quotes in the opera. These elements, along with a strong Yorkshire accent written into the script, start to draw a picture of her working class status:

"Eeee, Leeds, like it and lump it!
We're from Donny. Doncaster!"

Perhaps the librettist's function for Linda was to make the opera more accessible for the working class local choir members and audience. Indeed, I read her as a comical character in a dramatic art form, providing a relief from the piece's heavy themes of suicide and anxiety in its main Female protagonist Erin; I will discuss how I concluded this, as well as how my performative choices shaped the portrayal of Linda.

Firstly, the stage directions on Linda's entrance are, "The wind band come on stage dressed in holiday gear, in puffin colours. Linda brings on a deckchair and drinks

²⁴⁷ Bartók & Baker (1933), p. 269.

from a can of beer”. These elements implied for me a playful, lighthearted character who enjoys the basic comforts in life. At the costume fitting with designer Jane Robinson, Linda’s comedic role was further affirmed to me. Linda’s slightly incongruous costume of a red summer dress with white polka dots, along with her puffin-bill cap and oversized, white platform flip flops, indicates to me a clown, **Image 2.**



**Image 2. Anikó Tóth as Linda in *Flight Paths*.
Photo by Malcolm Johnson, 2011.**

The libretto indicates to the composer to use a musical reference to ‘When a Felon’s not Engaged in his Employment’ from the musical comedy *Pirates of Penzance* in Linda’s song conversation with Erin:

Oh, yesterday, we went to see the puffins
(Choir: see the puffins)
And the puffin has got very flappy feet
(Choir: flappy feet)
They whiz about like they’ve got outboard motors
(Choir: outboard motors)
And all the kiddies laugh when they’re around

(Choir: they're around).

This treatment of repetition and boisterous melody quoting a comic operetta already indicate a playful, comedic characterisation for Linda. The wind band accompaniment gives it a sense of pomp. Also, the libretto indicates to the composer for the choir to sing nicknames of the puffin, a favourite Bempton Cliffs bird, many of which reference clowns, e.g. 'mad clown' and 'pulcinella di mare'. Further, aside from their varicoloured faces, puffins also have a laugh-like call, further justifying their clown-based nicknames.

Going by Bosma's and Abbate's argument that the performer has power in creating (co-authoring) music, in this case an operatic character, I had another reference point, that of the music. Linda's characterisation, some of which is indicated by the librettist, as above, is also created by the composer, of course. The musical reference point composer Stephen Kilpatrick chose for Linda, which he mentioned in rehearsals,²⁴⁸ is the Acid Queen,²⁴⁹ played by Tina Turner, from The Who's 1975 rock musical film *Tommy*.²⁵⁰ While the instrumentation given by librettist Adam Strickson is a local community wind band of varying levels of ability,²⁵¹ Kilpatrick's Acid Queen reference was the composer's own addition. Interestingly, during the collaborative creation period, I observed librettist Adam Strickson disagree with composer Stephen Kilpatrick's view of Linda as the Acid Queen, which apparently was against the librettist's intention. This specifically brings up the question again, therefore, about who 'authors' an operatic character.

While librettist Strickson did provide character breakdowns for other main characters (**Appendix 10.**), Linda was omitted from the detailed list. This meant even more responsibility to me as performer to create her; indeed, I only used as a reference point the character breakdowns for my interpretation of Ilona and her relationship to Erin and Irene within the story, rather than as a set of acting directions. As performer, and final co-author, as posited by Bosma,²⁵² that was my prerogative, just as it was

²⁴⁸ Kilpatrick (2011), personal discussion.

²⁴⁹ Who, The. (1969). 'The Acid Queen'. [CD].

Tommy. London: Polydor.

²⁵⁰ Russel, Ken (director) (1975) *Tommy*. [Film]. UK: Hemdale Film.

²⁵¹ Partly due to the funding as a community project for the 2012 Cultural Olympiad.

²⁵² Bosma (1996).

the composer's prerogative to use whatever musical references he chose according to his interpretation, as co-author. As the music had already been written at the point of the disagreement, and I as performer had already received this reference as a new layer of meaning from which to create Linda, the co-authorship role in *creating* the character was now in my hands. To further establish Linda's comic role, already partly created by the librettist with Linda's love of rhythm and blues that Kilpatrick incongruently juxtaposed with rock, as well as by the wind band's playing with varied accuracy of tuning, I knew dance movement would be required. The music called for it due to a repeated 12-bar musical interlude²⁵³ between singing passages.

I researched Tina Turner's performance²⁵⁴ as the *Tommy* Acid Queen for the development of Linda's movement (which includes a signature move attributed to Mick Jagger).²⁵⁵ These movements can be seen on the **Video** (38:34-38:50).²⁵⁶ In my rehearsal score, I have also marked "break the fourth wall; strut", a verbal stage direction from director Adam Strickson, for which the Turner/Jagger moves I chose would be appropriate. See **Figure 9.**, below.

²⁵³ From bar 1053, Rehearsal mark R, and again from bar 1074, *Flight Paths* score (2011), in Kilpatrick (2013), vol 2.

²⁵⁴ TinaTurnerBlog (2013) 'Tina Turner - Acid Queen - Tommy (HD 720P)'[Online] <https://youtu.be/Xo4C5FpRSPU>, accessed 24 May 2015. (original observed video url has been moved from YouTube.)

²⁵⁵ Actually, Jagger's moves were developed by Tina Turner, according to Biography.com's 'Tina Turner' biography. [Online] <http://www.biography.com/people/tina-turner-9512276/videos/tina-turner-mick-jaggers-moves-6816835702>, accessed 24 May 2015.

²⁵⁶ See **Appendix 1. Video 4.**

break the 4th wall - strut
strut

55

1061

Clarinet in Bb (oboe)

Alto Saxophone

Tenor Saxophone

Baritone Saxophone

Euphonium

Tuba

Aniko

(deliberately mispronounced "mar") oo-oh

Choir

Ma ca-eux Moi - ne Pul-cin-e-lla di Mare

ffins pu - ffins pu - ffins pu - ffins

1067

Alto Saxophone

Tenor Saxophone

Baritone Saxophone

Aniko

yes - ter - day we want to see the pu - ffins and a pu - ffin has got ve - ry fla - ppy feet The - y

Choir

see the pu - ffins fla - ppy feet

see the pu - ffins fla - ppy feet

1071

Alto Saxophone

Tenor Saxophone

Baritone Saxophone

Aniko

whizz a - boat like they've got out-board mo - tors and the ki - dics laugh when they are all a - round

Choir

out-board mo - tors they're a - round p -

out-board mo - tors they're a - round p -

round

Figure 9. Linda's puffin song, *Flight Paths* score, with stage direction to "strut". Also visible is my interpretation of Doncastrian vowel pronunciation of Linda's text, below.

In addition to the Tina Turner/Mick Jagger movement reference, I used the puffins I observed during the rehearsal period in Bridlington - where I had access to the

RSPB²⁵⁷ bird centre in nearby Bempton Cliffs.²⁵⁸ I created a vocabulary of movements to include rapid nodding²⁵⁹ and flapping of elbows to reflect how they groom themselves. This can be seen in the performance **Video** (39:14-39:28). A hybrid of the two movement styles can be seen at (39:46-40:13).²⁶⁰

As a singer, acting techniques must come into play, as I am not a working class Yorkshire woman who drinks beer and goes on holiday in a caravan in East Riding, but a Californian-Hungarian cultural hybrid of middle class origin. It sounds obvious, but to embody a fully-human character, it is necessary to choose characteristics that are based in truth and observation, as delineated by revolutionary acting trainer Constantin Stanislavski:

An actor should be observant not only on the stage but also in real life. He should concentrate with all his being on whatever attracts his attention... There are people gifted by nature with powers of observation... When you hear such people talk, you are struck by the amount that an unobservant person misses... the facial expression, the look of the eye, the tone of the voice, in order to comprehend the state of mind of the persons with whom they talk.... This... calls for a tremendous amount of work, time, desire to succeed, and a systematic practice.²⁶¹

Indeed, living on an ex-council estate in the North of England, I have met women similar to how I saw Linda, working class women who love music and comedy, as well as enjoying a drink at the weekend. I chose one of my neighbours as inspiration to flesh out Linda's character. Suzy is a wiry woman in her fifties who runs a tanning salon with her family. The tanning salon is the hub of the neighbourhood, where she talks with her clients, who stay in her shop socialising after their sessions. On the estate, she acts as a matriarchal figure; as she has lived here since childhood, she is consulted on most conflicts and concerns within the area. Her leadership shows her dedication to the community. Stanislavski writes,

²⁵⁷ Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

²⁵⁸ Walking in the landscape of the opera's setting during the rehearsal period also gave a sense of Erin's journey and the locations of each character, like stations on a pilgrimage.

²⁵⁹ While I viewed the puffins *in situ* during the rehearsal period of September 2011, puffin movement can be observed here: animals2x2 (2011) 'Puffins Video (Fratercula arctica)' [Online] <https://youtu.be/j01ECAkl1TA>, accessed 24 May 2015.

²⁶⁰ See **Appendix 1. Video 4.**

²⁶¹ Stanislavski (1963/1990), p. 104.

You must constantly be adding to your store [as an actor]. For this purpose you draw... principally upon your own impressions, feelings and experiences. You also acquire material from life around, real and imaginary... and above all from communication with other human beings.²⁶²

I used these observational acting techniques for Suzy's playfulness and sense of humour, as well as the reference points given by co-authors librettist Adam Strickson and composer Stephen Kilpatrick, to create the physical characteristics of Linda to try to flesh her out from the stereotype and to show a deeper sense of her mothering role for Erin; this is brought out when Erin recognises the green caravan park,²⁶³ where Linda is vacationing, as a childhood holiday location with her mother. This co-authorship of Linda must stretch also to the vocal characterisation, which I will now discuss.

6.2.2. Vocal characterisation using re-contextualised techniques

In creating the vocal characteristics for Linda, I researched the Yorkshire accent by watching videos of Sean Bean²⁶⁴ and then asked for a Yorkshire colleague's coaching. As in the above excerpt from the score, **Figure 9.**, I worked to find effective vowel sounds to portray the Yorkshire character. For the Stage@Leeds performances, I also added a puffin 'laugh', which is very nasal and raucous, to Linda's vocal characterisation. In terms of singing technique, what is unusual in this opera is the juxtaposition, by the librettist and composer, of Linda's two singing voices: Classical / Opera voice and chest quality.²⁶⁵ She begins Classically on, "Did you see the puffins?" but then shows her karaoke prowess in a chest rendition of Bette Midler's 'Wind Beneath My Wings'. I interpret this juxtaposition to mean that the operatic voice is her speaking voice, which is raucous, cacophonous and high, perhaps channelling the puffins she loves, while the low, chesty karaoke voice shows how she perceives herself, as a karaoke maven. (Perhaps she may dream of being discovered on a talent show.) Also unusual for opera - and she is the only character who does this - she uses a microphone throughout, which, as a character prop, seems to bring out further her show-womanship and large, playful personality.

²⁶² Stanislavski (1963/1990), p. 95.

²⁶³ Strickson (2011) *Flight Paths* libretto, p. 11.

²⁶⁴ For example, this candid video Kanaal van Govi20 (2008). Sean Bean interview. [Online] <https://youtu.be/V20yyDt6NUo>, accessed September 2011 and 25 May 2015.

²⁶⁵ See Glossary.

6.3. Embodying the Female in Performance – *Ilona*

6.3.1. Acting, Costume and Dance/ Movement

Ilona, Hungarian-born RSPB²⁶⁶ worker, a transplant to Bempton Cliffs, is a much deeper and more developed character than Linda and serves the main female protagonist in several ways: she initially stops Erin from throwing herself off the cliff, physically catching her, as well as distracting her from her intention by pointing out the nesting seabirds on the cliffs and showing her the farm birds in the telescope. As Erin refuses Ilona's help, she urges Erin to follow the birds of prey peregrines, hoping they will guide her and continue her curiosity, rather than dwelling on suicide. Later, Ilona acts as midwife in Erin's rebirth and transformation,²⁶⁷ symbolised by the near-drowning in the sea, from which Ilona saves Erin. While Spitfire Irene is the true Good Mother²⁶⁸ (Godmother) quest archetype character, providing food, compassion and maternal nurturing, Ilona can be seen as the assistant 'fairy godmother', being in the right place at the right time to save Erin from imminent death. She says, "I must be your guardian angel",²⁶⁹ towelling off the exhausted girl.

In developing the character of Ilona, I had several reference points from the librettist. Due to my previous collaborative work with Adam Strickson on projects *Red Angel* (2009) and *Green Angel* (2010-2011), Adam was familiar with my personal background and seems to have used some of these details to write Ilona; for example her family background is Hungarian and, to keep alive her heritage, she "knows Hungarian folk song and sometimes sings snatches of it".²⁷⁰ This connection to me as a performer allowed me to begin my role as co-author for Hungarian transplant Ilona. Ilona serves an important function in the story, acting as a "beacon or mentor for Erin", the opera's protagonist.²⁷¹ Additional character elements that manifest also in the libretto is her work for as an RSPB²⁷² guide in Bempton Cliffs, East Riding (UK), where the opera is set: "She remains something of a loner and is

²⁶⁶ Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

²⁶⁷ Howard (2010), p. 7.

²⁶⁸ Howard (2010), p. 4.

²⁶⁹ Libretto, Strickson (2011), p. 22.

²⁷⁰ Strickson (2010) Character descriptions, *Flight Paths* opera. unpublished.

²⁷¹ Strickson (2010) Character descriptions, *Flight Paths* opera. unpublished.

²⁷² Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

absolutely passionate about wildlife, the cliffs, sea-swimming...”²⁷³ To add to Strickson’s character descriptions, I used Stanislavski’s acting techniques, such as imagination:

Every movement you make on the stage, every word you speak, is the result of the right life of your imagination. The creative process starts with the imaginative invention of a poet, a writer, a director of the play, the actor, the scene designer, and others in the production, so the first order should be *imagination*. We cannot directly act on our emotions, but we can prod our creative fantasy and [it] stirs up our *emotion* or *affective memory*, calling up from its secret depths, beyond the reach of consciousness, elements of already experience emotions, and re-groups them to correspond with the images which arise in us... That is what a creative fantasy is a fundamental, absolutely necessary gift for an actor.²⁷⁴

I decided that she was orphaned and had to make her own way in the world. She needed a change from her land-locked country, and, on a short internship to England, she found her place among the birds in Bempton Cliffs. As she has battled depression, especially after the loss of her parents, and undergone her own search for meaning, she easily recognises and empathises with Erin’s emotional upheaval. She is quick-thinking, compassionate and emotionally aware. Also, due to her quiet observation of every detail of animal movement and behaviour, she is acutely aware of Erin’s erratic behaviour and tries to point her towards the wildlife around her to distract Erin from jumping off the cliff.

The libretto stage directions state that Ilona “instinctively grabs” Erin as she is about to jump off the cliff. This means to me that Ilona must have a strong, grounded physical presence with efficiency of movement. The librettist’s character description states that Ilona has “a patience and stillness around her”. With this in mind, I looked to my background in massage therapy and the corresponding Tai Chi training I had had. My choice for Ilona’s movement was to be deliberate, slow and graceful, as if she were doing Tai Chi; I moved with bent legs to lower my centre of gravity. I also embodied Ilona filling the space with her arms out, to represent the wings in flight of the birds she loves, as well as her love of swimming and diving in the local bay, foreshadowing her rescue of Erin. For the near-drowning, I worked collaboratively with soprano Nadine Benjamin (formerly Mortimer-Smith) as Erin to devise a slow-

²⁷³ Strickson (2010) Character descriptions, *Flight Paths opera*. unpublished.

²⁷⁴ Stanislavski (1924/1990), p. 75.

motion routine of stylised dance to indicate the arduousness of the journey (to Erin's rebirth) and the passage of time; this can be observed on the **Video** (01:02:07 - 01:02:56).²⁷⁵ Initially, we face each other 'swimming' in opposite directions to signal Erin's panic and floundering. Then, she turns around and the movement is synchronised to show Erin cooperating with Ilona and gaining a sense of her own ability to bring herself out of the depths,²⁷⁶ a metaphor for the dénouement of her journey out of emotional depression and anxiety. Later, I will discuss how the libretto and music indicate this, but first I will discuss how Ilona's costume added to my frame of reference for movement and characterisation.



Image 3. Ilona saves Erin from the waves. (*Flight Paths*). Photo by Malcolm Johnson, 2011.

After saving Erin from the depths of Thornwick Bay, Erin asks, “What are you doing here?” Ilona's response is with an aria extolling the wonders of the Flamborough front, “the best reef in England, the rainforest of the sea. Diving is like birdwatching, but under the sea”, furthering her earthy connection to the nature around her, and emphasising her physicality grounded in exercise. In the above **Image 3.**, Ilona is wearing a wetsuit, a costume chosen by Jane Robinson in consultation with director/librettist Adam Strickson, further showing Ilona's physicality and health. The

²⁷⁵ See **Appendix 1. Video 4.**

²⁷⁶ See **Appendix 1. Video 4.** (01:02:07 - 01:02:56).

flexibility of the wetsuit allowed me to run to the ‘sea’ and create Ilona’s flowing dance-swim movement. In the embodiment of Ilona, my uniquely female body shape is clearly outlined in the wetsuit. (Indeed, the body shape is essential here; an overweight Ilona would not have worked.) The gestures and movements performed are flowing and graceful (which could be called ‘feminine’); however, the action and activity show Ilona as powerful, and active. Where Iris Young (2005/1980) finds that, “Reflection on feminine comportment and body movement in other physical activities reveals that these also are frequently characterized, much as in the [case of throwing a ball], by a failure to make full use of the body’s spatial and lateral potentialities”,²⁷⁷ my portrayal of Ilona flouts this. As Ilona, I make full use of the lateral space with outstretched arms, a run to save Erin, and fully engaged dance movement in saving her. This sense of power and action are what makes her a female protagonist. She is not just an object, but has full physical agency in the situation.

Earlier, Ilona wears the very practical clothing of an RSPB shirt, cargo trousers and hiking boots, in line with the character description “She has no real eye for fashion and likes to be in comfortable outdoor clothes and good shoes”.²⁷⁸ While she wears heavy clothing at the bottom, as chosen by the designers/director, I kept her upper body movement light and flowing by keeping arms out, to signal Ilona’s connection to the birds and sea-swimming (**Video**, 10:07-10:57).²⁷⁹

With regard to female embodiment, in a conversation with an agent looking at my online material, he commented that it was problematic that my portrayal of Ilona in her RSPB costume was the first video that came up in the online search. When questioned, he said the costume does not show me in a very attractive light, the first impression of which could make getting work difficult. In response, I did change the titles of other online videos to include my name and ‘soprano’, so that an observer could see me in other iterations. I did not, however, remove the Ilona video. Embodying a powerful, active character with clear interests and actions and portraying her vocally with beautiful and emotive music was important to show in my repertoire as an artist. The comment did bring to the fore the way women are viewed

²⁷⁷ Young (1980/2005), p. 32.

²⁷⁸ Strickson (2010) Character descriptions, *Flight Paths opera*. unpublished.

²⁷⁹ See **Appendix 1. Video 4.** (10:07-10:57).

in performance and as themselves, being open as *objects* for scrutiny by the outside eye, in particularly the male gaze,²⁸⁰ as in this case. As Young says:

An essential part of the situation of being a woman is that of living the ever-present possibility that one will be gazed upon as a mere body... rather than as a living manifestation of action and intention.²⁸¹

For Ilona, because of her dynamic physicality, it can be said that, while she is gazed upon by the audience, and perhaps objectified, her agency in the story takes prevalence. In this way, by performing Ilona, I am adding to the repertoire of women's expression for audiences.

6.3.2. Ilona's Music

My final reference point for the creation of Ilona is the music, of course. For Ilona's music, composer Stephen Kilpatrick referenced Hungarian folk songs, including those with bird themes.²⁸² These folk songs referred to the Hungarian background of Ilona (and myself) with modal and metrical shifts. For example, Kilpatrick referenced the melody of 'Repülj, madár, repülj' ('Fly, Bird, Fly'), performed by the Hungarian Muzsikás Ensemble.²⁸³ This can be heard in bars 468-481, after which Ilona's main folk-like melody re-emerges:

²⁸⁰ Carter and Steiner (2004), p. 349.

²⁸¹ Young (1980/2005), p. 44.

²⁸² Kilpatrick (2013), pp. 107-113.

²⁸³ Muzsikás Ensemble (1993) 'Repülj, madár, repülj' (track 6) *Nem arrol hajnalik, amerről hajnalott*. [CD] Hungary: Hungaroton, HDC 18121.

474

Ilona

There's so much we don't see what's your name

Violin 1

Violin 2

Viola

Violoncello

478

Erin

SPOKEN: "I told you to leave me alone" Whisper: "Hidden..." "alone"

Ilona

SPOKEN: "My name's Ilona." "I work here." "I help people. Show them the birds"

Violin 1

Violin 2

Viola

Violoncello

482

Ilona

Two hundred thousand birds

Violin 1

Violin 2

Viola

Violoncello

♩ = 80

mp

mp

Figure 10. Ilona's melody at bars 474-481 references Hungarian folk-song 'Repülj, madár, repülj'.

This Muzsikás Ensemble setting of the folk song was a mutual reference point for the composer and me, as we both owned and had listened extensively to the album.

The soundworld of Stephen Kilpatrick's opera *Flight Paths*, libretto by Adam Strickson, is influenced by birds of the Bempton Cliffs area in East Riding, off the north east coast of England. His string quartet *Bempton Cliffs* was originally created as a treatment and sketch of the soundworld the composer was to explore throughout the opera *Flight Paths*, where birds and scenery were as important as the

human characters that pass through their environs. One of these characters is Ilona. Ilona's first musical theme is introduced by the cello in the string quartet; a beautiful folk-like melody inspired by Bartók's *Bluebeard's Castle* 'castle theme', it has a folk-song-like sound implying Hungarianness. The composer discusses the meaning of Ilona's melody in the opera against the bird song that surrounds it, played by the violins:

The folk-like nature of the melody, and the fact that it is heard simultaneously with the birdsong [at the beginning of the opera] implies a relationship with nature. This relationship is reinforced when we meet the character of Ilona - a character apparently at one with nature and seemingly possessing an inner peace - who takes this melody as her main theme...²⁸⁴

She begins to sing the theme at bar 259, **Figure 11.**, below:

16

Ilona

Violin 2

Viola

Violoncello

Ilona

Violin 1

Violin 2

Two hun - dred thou - sand birds.

Bempt - on Cliffs. Sea bird ci -

Figure 11. Ilona's folk-like melody at her entrance in *Flight Paths*. (continued below)

²⁸⁴ Kilpatrick (2013), p. 104-105.

≡

Musical score for Ilona's entrance in *Flight Paths*, measures 273-280. The score is for Ilona (Soprano), Violin 1, Violin 2, Viola, and Violoncello. The tempo is marked $\text{♩} = 100$ and $\text{♩} = 80$. The key signature is one flat (B-flat). The time signature is 4/4. The lyrics are: "-ty. This is our Se -".

≡

Musical score for Ilona's entrance in *Flight Paths*, measures 274-280. The score is for Ilona (Soprano), Violin 1, and Violin 2. The tempo is marked $\text{♩} = 100$ and $\text{♩} = 80$. The key signature is one flat (B-flat). The time signature is 4/4. The lyrics are: "ren - ge - - ti."

≡

≡

Musical score for Ilona's entrance in *Flight Paths*, measures 281-287. The score is for Ilona (Soprano) and Violin 2. The tempo is marked $\text{♩} = 100$ and $\text{♩} = 80$. The key signature is one flat (B-flat). The time signature is 4/4. The lyrics are: "This is our li - fe on earth."

Figure 11. Ilona's folk-like melody at her entrance in *Flight Paths*.

The pentatonic elements of the melody set against the violin's soaring line, set the scene for Ilona as a singer of folk songs, in response to Strickson's character description. The melismatic text setting also indicated to me Ilona's emotive but peaceful persona. Stanislavski comments on the importance of connecting to the deeper meanings music in operatic preparation:

The production notes of Richard Wagner contain...the secret of producing an opera. You can make human beings out of [his heroes] if you can... plan their

actions in consonance with the *inner meaning* of the music and not the *external effects*.²⁸⁵

With this in mind, although the composer mentions the folk simplicity of the song, its use of dissonant intervals, like major 7ths and augmented 4ths (e.g. bar 263) belie a more complex character beneath the surface.²⁸⁶ These, to me, represented the trials and tribulations Ilona must have endured to find this inner peace and which would have given her perspective and insight into Erin's agitated state of mind. When discussing the preparation of a role, Stanislavski uses musical terms to describe the "score of a role":

The first requirement is that the score [of a role] have the power to attract, ... excite the actor not only by its external physical truth but above all by its inner beauty... Let us now add depth to the score... The difference will lie in the inner life... inner impulses, psychological intimations... that constitute the *inner tone*... We can experience varying emotions when playing a score with the same objectives but in different keys... quiet or joyful... sad or... disturbed or in an excited key... One's score which is to portray human passions, must be rich, colourful, and varied... An actor must know the nature of a passions... how to cull [from the text] the component units, objectives, moments, which in their sum total add up to a human passions... The score saturates every particle of an actor's inner being... In this innermost... core... all the remaining objectives converge, as it were, into one super-objective... the concentration of the entire score... For the actor the through action [through line] is the *active attainment of the super-objective*.²⁸⁷

In this case, I have not only the text but the music to give depth to the characterisation. Ilona's main objective is to live among nature and to share this with others, such as Erin. Ilona's objective in the scene with Erin is to use this passion for sharing nature to give Erin a new perspective, to distract her from the stress and anxiety from which Ilona has temporarily saved her. For example, the first part of the 'Farmbirds' song (Legs of twig) Ilona sings again shows her closeness to nature. Ilona's soaring folksong theme (bar 439) above the children's choir (from bar 425) gives the feeling of flying free. Here, we again hear the influence of the pentatonic nature of old-style Hungarian folk songs, as defined by Bartók.²⁸⁸ **Figure 12.**, below:

²⁸⁵ Stanislavski (1924/1990), p. 13.

²⁸⁶ See **Appendix 1. Video 4.** (09:45-10:57).

²⁸⁷ Stanislavski (1924/1990), p. 125.

²⁸⁸ Bartók (1981).

439

Ilona

Children's Choir

Violin 2

Viola

Violoncello

443

Children's Choir

Violin 2

Viola

Violoncello

450

Ilona

Children's Choir

Lone female voice:
"Tseek-tseek- tsee-tississisk" X 2

Figure 12. Ilona's soaring vocal line harmonises with the pentatonic tune of the children's choir, bringing out her folk connection as well as her connection to the birds.

This simple melodic treatment of the text was a deliberate choice by the composer, firstly to consider the young singers' limited vocal abilities - an important element in composition,²⁸⁹ providing guidance by a more experienced singer, and secondly, to show Ilona's Hungarianness²⁹⁰ and simple connection to nature.²⁹¹ We can hear the pentatonic folk-like melodic treatment of Ilona's music in her aria, performed in her wetsuit, as in **Figure 13.**, below.

²⁸⁹ Wilkins (2006).

²⁹⁰ Kilpatrick (2013), p. 97.

²⁹¹ Kilpatrick (2013), p. 107.

Ilona 1517
Flam - bor - ough front, The best reef in Eng - land, The rain fo - rest of the sea. Div - ing is like

Violin 1
Violin 2
Viola
Violoncello

Ilona 1527
bird watch - ing, but un - der the sea: Star fish, jol - ly - fish, but - ter - fish, sea urch - ins,

Violin 1
Violin 2
Viola
Violoncello

Ilona 1535
a - ne - mo - nes, May - be a por - poise.

Spitfire Irene
It's my as - ton - ish - ing - ly brave girl. You look cold. You need to get

Violin 1
Violin 2
Viola
Violoncello

Figure 13. Ilona's pentatonic Flamborough diving aria.²⁹²

In the above figure, the simple folk-like elements come through, but we have to look deeper, following Stanislavski, to hear that the key changes show her complexity of character; for example, the modulation upwards at bar 1533 shows Ilona coming out of her calm and showing her passion for the nature around her. At bar 1535-1538, we hear her calm returning as she modulates downward.

²⁹² See also **Appendix 1. Video 4.**, (1:03:57-1:05:00).

The hybridisation of the Classical and Hungarian vocal styles occur within the music. As performer of Ilona, I was able to reference some of the conventions of Hungarian folk music. For example, in singing the semi-quaver beginning to her initial aria, ‘Seabird city’, I brought the quick note change, which evokes the *appoggiature* of embellished folk song.

6.4. Further Collaboration

As part of the events surrounding *Flight Paths*, as part of the 2012 Cultural Olympiad, was a concert at Sewerby Hall, where I performed excerpts from the opera with pianist Lauryna Šablevičiūtė. I sang two of Erin’s songs from the opera, including ‘When I was a little girl’, an atonal piece. In terms of collaboration, I worked with the composer to ensure the *tessitura* of the piece suited my lyric soprano (Classical) voice. Originally written in the key of C, as in **Figure 14.**, below:

The musical score for Erin's 'When I Was a Little Girl' aria, measures 614-620, is presented in a standard musical notation format. The score includes staves for Erin (soprano), Violin 1, Violin 2, Viola, and Violoncello. Erin's lyrics are: 'When I was a lit-tle girl in Wood-house, Leeds, my win-dow framed a ci - ty park of bur-ning tyres and bro-ken glass. When I was a big ger girl in Cookridge, Leeds, sul pont.' The score includes performance instructions such as 'mp', 'f', 'arco', 'con sord.', 'pizz.', and 'sul pont.'.

Figure 14. Original operatic setting of Erin’s ‘When I Was a Little Girl’ aria.

I requested that the piece be taken down by a third for the concert, so that the highest note was an Ab6. This meant the text could be understood more clearly. The piece is written with no repetition and is treated syllabically, without melisma, as

Wilson (2015) says is common among contemporary composers.²⁹³ It is also full of complex consonant clusters, such as “framed a skip piled high”, which features a “-p p-” combination, difficult to sing and to communicate clearly at height. The change of *tessitura* of the piece made the text more clear, which is essential to the very musical treatment; if the piece had made more feature of the voice as vehicle for emotion with the use of melisma and repetition, perhaps the high *tessitura* could be equally effective - indeed, the original key does allow for a sense of heightened agitation, as can be heard when Nadine Benjamin (formerly Mortimer-Smith) sings it (**Video** 21:56-23:42). However, at this range, I felt the piece communicated more clearly and sat better in my voice.²⁹⁴

Erin’s ‘Caravan Song’ had been influenced by Purcell’s *Dido and Aeneas*, which was originally written for young singers at a girl’s school, and the *tessitura* (E4-G5) was tested and effective for communicating the text, in **Figure 15.**, below:

The image displays two staves of a musical score for Erin's 'Caravan Song'. The first staff, labeled 'Erin', is a vocal line in treble clef with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). It begins at measure 866. The lyrics are: 'Why, can't I be a lit-tle girl in a car-a- van, in a car-a- van, in a car-a- van... by the sea? Those'. The second staff is an instrumental accompaniment for Violin 2, Viola, and Violoncello, in bass clef with the same key signature. It begins at measure 874. The lyrics for this section are: 'rock pool days, sand and spade, Just my mu-m and me? Rock pool days, sand and spade, just my mum and... me?'. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like 'f' (forte).

Figure 15. The score of Erin’s ‘Caravan Song’ shows its lower *tessitura*, which allowed for clarity of speech.

Notable is that the composer changed the libretto upon my suggestion; the original text by Strickson was “bucket and spade”, the percussive sound of which sat very awkwardly in the lyrical melody line. Acting as vocal consultant for the composer

²⁹³ Wilson (2015).

²⁹⁴ See **Appendix 1. Audio. 1.** for audio recording of the Sewerby Concert version.

during the majority of the compositional period, I found the alliterative aspect of “sand and spade” effective for putting across the original meaning of the text; being monosyllabic, it also fit better in the musical line, to which the composer agreed. The composer was able to use melisma to bring out the vocal line, which made it more emotionally expressive for the singer than ‘When I was a little girl’, the atonality of which represents Erin’s disjointed emotional state. Indeed, some of the word settings remained awkward in the opera, but Nadine Benjamin (formerly Mortimer-Smith) consulted with the composer during rehearsals to change certain word settings and even remove some text, for example in Erin’s final aria during which she takes on Ilona’s folk-like ‘Farm Birds’ theme. In Erin’s reprise of the ‘Farm Birds’ theme, instead of “skylark, warbler thrush”²⁹⁵ on her high melismatic line, the composer changed the text to “Ah!” so that the vocal line was easier to sing at the very high *tessitura*. See **Figure 16.**, below.

72

Erin
our hid - den voi - ces haunt the air. You can see us if you hush

Children's Choir
hid - den voi - ces haunt the air. You can see us if you hush:

Violin 2
Viola
Violoncello

Erin
Ah!

Children's Choir
sky - lark, war - bler, thrush.

Violin 1
Violin 2
Viola
Violoncello

arco
pp

Figure 16. Erin takes on Ilona’s love for nature in the ‘Farm Birds’ reprise. The word setting at the end has been changed to “Ah!” upon request by singer, Nadine Benjamin (formerly Mortimer-Smith).

In this case, repetitive text was sacrificed for musical integrity, as well as for the singer’s comfort, which Wilson (2015) and Elliott (2006) both corroborate must sometimes occur for effective performance in collaborative new works. This

²⁹⁵ Kilpatrick (2011) *Flight Paths* score, p. 72.

accessibility for the singer was important during the performance, but also for future performances of the work. In this sense, the music was created collaboratively between singers and composer. Ilona's 'Farm Birds' song, had been inspired by modal Hungarian folk music based on the background of Ilona (and me), written in a pentatonic tune, starting in the minor and moving to the major, which I discuss in the Ilona section of this chapter. It is in a lower range than the other two pieces which shows the composer's consideration of my preferred vocal range (C4 - A5), as he was writing the piece with my voice and musical background in mind.

6.5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the final collaborative process occurred between the three lead vocalists, Nadine Benjamin (formerly Mortimer-Smith), Taylor Wilson, and me in devising our scenes. In creating choreography with Benjamin and characters who discuss their personal stories (Ilona, Linda, etc.), we as performers bonded during the compact rehearsal period, during which we lived, ate and slept together in a single house. In keeping with Pasler's comment about the "feminine attributes [of] sociability... and community",²⁹⁶ the cast brought this personal level of intimacy and connection onto the stage. How this manifested itself was the honest hug I as Ilona gave Benjamin as Erin, as well as the way I helped Irene carry her stick and to take her to sit down. Because of our level of personal intimacy, as well as the time we spent using devising/choreographic strategies to improvise and set our on-stage movements, our stage actions were believable.

²⁹⁶ Pasler (1992), p. 205 (p. 4 online).

Chapter Seven: *The Night Bride*: A Music Theatre Piece for Soprano, Cimbalom and Fixed Medium

7.1. Abstract

“[W]e must reject femininity as meaning *without libido*, and therefore incomplete, subhuman, a cultural reduction of human possibilities, and rely upon the indefinite term female, which retains the possibility of female libido.” - Germaine Greer²⁹⁷

Teresa de Lauretis asserts that the Western hero is always male, the subject, the human being, whereas the female is simply the other, the obstacle, the element or foil or even a plot device, immutable, unchangeable and certainly not human.²⁹⁸

“The 1697 *La Barbe Bleu* combines the vengeful wife-slaying husband, the taboo action or question, and the woman’s redemptive quest.” – Mike Ashman²⁹⁹

The Night Bride, composed by Stephen Kilpatrick, libretto by Mike Sizemore, focuses upon the research questions in a variety of ways: The female protagonist; an exploration of the collaborative process between composer and performer; and the development, hybridisation and re-contextualisation of folk vocal techniques within a contemporary classical context. The exploration of the position of the female protagonist in many ways draws upon the writings of Germaine Greer. The collaborative process between the composer and performer in this piece, in many respects, draws upon that found between composer Tim Benjamin and performer Taylor Wilson (See Case Study), but also presented its own unique set of explorations, as will become clear. The vocal techniques at the heart of *The Night Bride* draw particularly upon Hungarian folk and Classical genres, while the voiceover work uses vocal characterisation to bring to life the Brides and the Narrator.

7.2. Overview

The Night Bride, composed by Stephen Kilpatrick, libretto by Mike Sizemore, is a 20-minute, multi-media music theatre piece for soprano, cimbalom and fixed medium.³⁰⁰

The piece received its world premiere in Vienna on the 3rd of June 2012 with

²⁹⁷ Greer, Germaine. (2006/1971). *The female eunuch*. London: Fourth Estate. - p. 78.

²⁹⁸ McClary, S. (1991), p. 14. referencing: de Lauretis, Teresa (1984). "Desire in Narrative", *Alice Doesn't*, p.118-119. Indiana University Press.

²⁹⁹ Ashman, Mike (1991), pp. 35-38.

³⁰⁰ Sometimes still known by its historical name ‘tape’, the term ‘fixed medium’ refers to recorded material, now in a digital format.

Psappha Ensemble's Tim Williams on traditional Hungarian tuned percussion instrument cimbalom. I performed live as *Anna* and was featured on the fixed medium as the *Brides* and *Narrator*. The UK premiere of the piece, adapted for vibraphone, took place at the Salford Sonic Fusion Festival 2014 on the 4th of April and featured Italian percussionist Enrico Bertelli with the original fixed medium and adapted score, choreography and costume elements, as well as some vocal stylistic changes, which will be discussed later.

The piece began as a collaborative, 3-part project, beginning with the initial stimulus of Kilpatrick's 2007 short story 'The Night Bride',³⁰¹ which was adapted by writer Mike Sizemore into the text for a graphic novel to be illustrated by comic artist David Kennedy. This graphic novel³⁰² then became the stimulus for Kilpatrick's new music theatre work, in which I was able to work collaboratively with the composer regarding the choice of folk song stimuli and of vocal techniques in the music and fixed medium, as well as word settings. I created the character of Anna by my own interpretation of the musical and dramatic material, bringing my experience of acting and choreography into the mix. I will discuss the process of collaboration as well as performance preparation and execution in further detail later.

7.3. Research Context

7.3.1. Female Protagonist, Themes

Feminist writer Susan McClary cites Teresa de Lauretis, who asserts that the Western hero is always male, the subject, the human being, whereas the female is simply the other, the obstacle, the element or foil or even a plot device, immutable, unchangeable and certainly not human.³⁰³ Anna in *The Night Bride* works in contrast to this old perspective. Her character is rounded, escaping a traditional married role and then having to make choices within a difficult situation. Indeed, the gender roles de Lauretis cites are deliberately subverted in *The Night Bride*, where the male Rider becomes the foil for Anna's fully-human character, as he is never named. In the

³⁰¹ Kilpatrick, Stephen (2007) 'The Night Bride'. *New Writings in the Fantastic*, John Grant, ed. Glamorgan: Pendragon Press.

³⁰² Kennedy, Sizemore (2012). Unpublished.

³⁰³ McClary, S. (1991), p.14, referencing: de Lauretis, Teresa (1984). "Desire in Narrative", *Alice Doesn't*, p.118-119. Indiana University Press.

music theatre performance, he is also faceless. In the graphic novel³⁰⁴ on which the music is based, the Rider's often face is covered by a mask made of ram's horns and a cloak of fur, highlighting his beastlike persona.³⁰⁵ In this sense, Anna is the main human character as the female protagonist.

Human issues, such as power and dominance, gender roles and the responsibilities that come with shrugging off the yoke of cultural expectations, choosing one's own destiny and finding inner strength through a gauntlet of trauma and tragedy, are themes that are explored in *The Night Bride*. It is important that the protagonist (hero/ine) is female. Everything is from Anna's perspective, from the Narration in the tape sections (representing her doubts, as well as her social conditioning, the 'Cautionary Conscience'), to the sound world she hears in the fixed medium / tape underlay, to the arias she sings (bringing to the fore Anna's emotional state and showing shifts in her world view). In the performance, the only character the audience see is Anna and her reactions to what is happening to her and around her. This subverts de Lauretis' assertion, to create a new piece that is "told as a series of fixed-medium episodes, interrupted by Anna's own inner and outer voices in sung form".³⁰⁶ In other words, the piece is solely from the perspective of the female protagonist, who must deal with societal expectations, gender roles, and her own sexuality.

Germaine Greer highlights how women's natural ambition, desire, motive has been "systematically deflected from birth to puberty, so that when they come to maturity they have only fitful resource and creativity" and how "...opportunities have been made available to women far beyond their desires to use them"³⁰⁷ because of "the insistence upon a *passive sexual role*".³⁰⁸ In contrast, the journey of Anna in *The Night Bride* was intriguing and empowering, as I was able to create a rounded female character with a clear arc, not a stereotype.

³⁰⁴ Kennedy (2012).

³⁰⁵ See **Appendix 13**. for graphic novel excerpt.

³⁰⁶ Kilpatrick (2013), p. 117.

³⁰⁷ Greer, Germaine. (2006/1971). *The Female Eunuch*. London: Fourth Estate. - p. 76.

³⁰⁸ Ibid. p. 77. Italics are Greer's.

The Night Bride, its libretto by Mike Sizemore based on Stephen Kilpatrick's adaptation³⁰⁹ of the Szekler folk tale *Molnár Anna*³¹⁰ and the tale of *Bluebeard's Castle*, upon which the piece draws,³¹¹ features a female protagonist who has not followed the traditional path of marrying the man her mother has chosen for her. She has taken risks and chosen her own path, instead. Indeed, on her very wedding day, she is kidnapped by a mysterious Rider, the freedom of which excites her. The Narrator acts as a cautionary, traditional conscience, trying to keep Anna in her place (i.e. *gender role* of wife) under the guise of keeping her from harm (in a small, religious, traditional village, implied by the sounds of the church bells in the fixed medium). The Narrator cautions both at the beginning and at the end of the piece. Initially, Narrator as 'Cautionary Conscience' says:

Anna, why did he take you? Anna who is this man?
And on this of all days! A day that you dreamed of.
Anna, aren't you listening? Anna, aren't you scared?

Anna responds by rejecting her prescribed role in the first aria, Section B:

You say I was to be married.
You say that man was my husband-to-be.
You say this was the day I dreamed of.
You said all this [. You],³¹² not me.
I am not that girl.

Though she is passive in the kidnapping, she is excited about her new prospects as she tastes her new-found (sexual and social) freedom, which she experiences through the sensuality of riding³¹³ the Rider's horse. She expresses her innermost thoughts in Section C, which do not shy away from bodily functions or sexuality:

³⁰⁹ Kilpatrick, Stephen (2007) 'The Night Bride'. *New Writings in the Fantastic*, John Grant, ed. Glamorgan: Pendragon Press.

³¹⁰ Bosley, Keith and Peter Sherwood (1991) 'Annie Miller'. *The Stage Works of Béla Bartók*. London: John Calder, 23-24.

³¹¹ Though the piece subverts the *Bluebeard* story in that Anna saves herself, rather than being saved, as in the original story, by her brothers, or, as in Angela Carter's version, by her mother (Kilpatrick 2013, p. 117).

³¹² The original libretto has been edited here to fit the music.

³¹³ The text implies the breaking of the hymen during the ride, which gives rise to a sense of release from the bondage of the traditional role from which she thinks she has been freed by the Rider. It also implies a sexual awakening.

As the horse kicks below me,
I feel joy in the pain.
I feel blood tell a story;
I feel all this but no shame.

The forest ensnares us;
The darkness hides our wild ride!
He will be my fine husband,
And I his night bride.

Greer, in her 1971 polemic *The Female Eunuch*, highlights the importance of sexuality as part of a person's wider personality, the force and power of which leads to the inquiry into and curiosity for life, in general.³¹⁴

The acts of sex are themselves forms of inquiry, as the old euphemism 'carnal knowledge' makes clear: it is exactly the element of quest in her sexuality which the female is taught to deny... not only in her sexual contacts, but...in all her contacts from infancy onward, so that when she becomes aware of her sex the pattern has sufficient force of inertia to prevail over new forms of desire and curiosity. This is the condition which is meant by the term *female eunuch*.³¹⁵

No longer denying this element of quest of her sexuality, Anna seeks it in her new life. She throws off the mantle of tradition (i.e. *inertia*) to find her own path travelling with this new companion. She is excited by the prospect of sexual expression, shown by her eagerness in the 'riding' aria above (Section C). The fact that this is addressed in the piece shows the modernness of the writing of Anna's character and thus the transformation of the depiction of on stage female characters I am eager to portray. Kimmel (2008) illuminates the societal shift in women's sexuality: "In the past three decades... it's been women's sexuality that has been transformed, as women have sought to express their own sexual agency". Kimmel gives examples of this shift, saying a woman's virginity used to be her most prized possession, e.g. in the 1940s, by the 1960s becoming "a burden". He says, "Virginity was no longer 'a treasure to be safe-guarded'; now, it was 'a problem to be solved'".³¹⁶ Anna, depicted with a modern view of sexuality, is interested in and eager about sex and seeks adventure in this arena. To take Greer's correlation between sexuality and agency, Anna thus seeks empowerment and independence in her life.

³¹⁴ Greer (2006/1971), p. 77.

³¹⁵ Ibid. p. 78.

³¹⁶ Kimmel (2008), p. 296.

The piece next deals with another (typically) female theme of sexual domination and violence (rape) (Section D).³¹⁷ Here, she realises she is on her own, and not even the memory of the aunties and mother figures in her life can bring solace:

Is *this* what I welcomed? Is *this* what I sought?
Is this how men are? Is this now my life?
I gave myself gladly, so why does he fight?
(Spoken) Is it part of the ceremony? Am I now his wife?

She further rejects her mother's and aunts' descriptions of "wedding nights golden and new", to which her situation is a stark contrast:

My mother, her sisters, [all]³¹⁸ the women I knew,
They told me of wedding nights golden and new.
Of wonder and joy they wept and they cried.
(Spoken) To hell with those women! Oh, how they lied!

While the Rider sleeps in post-coital release, Anna discovers, in the ancient tree beneath which the Rider has camped, the hanging bodies of Rider's three previous 'Brides' - 'Morning', 'Day', and 'Evening', whose ghostly voices welcome her into their sisterhood, saying she will be their final companion (fixed medium). It is here that Anna's character truly snaps out of her reverie to become a new person; her survival instincts kick in, and she strengthens her resolve, throwing off this new mantle of victimhood of becoming the final bride 'Night'. She, instead, becomes the aggressor: "I am not that girl! It's not happening to me!" This is where the character again shows development and change from the innocent, naïve kidnapped bride to rape victim to survivor. This character shift, while perhaps disturbing to the audience, is inspiring. Anna is a complete person with clear intentions and must take full responsibility for her actions and for her own survival. She chooses to ignore the 'Cautionary Conscience' voice of the Narrator:

Anna where are you going? Don't you know you must flee?
The rider only sleeps for a while.

...

Anna, no leave his sword be! Anna, why make a sound?
The rider's eyes are open!

³¹⁷ The rape is implied, in the fixed medium just before Section D (aria), by the distorted bird and church bell sounds - the latter sounding more like 'warning bells' in Anna's mind.

³¹⁸ I added 'all' to fit the music, in collaboration with the composer.

You'll die this night. Join the horror high above.
Anna, why didn't you leave? Anna, weren't you scared?

In her final aria (Section F), Anna wields the sword with which he would have killed her, showing her true transformation from innocent victim to woman in charge of her own destiny:

I have your sword, my Rider.
Next, I'll have your head!
Roar like the animal you are,
Too stupid to know you're dead!



Image 4. Anna wields the Rider's sword. "Roar!" 2012 world premiere with Tim Williams on cimbalom. (*The Night Bride*). Video screenshot.

What is particularly interesting about the ending is its ambiguity. Anna continues to be assailed by the Narrator's 'Cautionary Conscience' (voices from her upbringing, perhaps) in the fixed medium narration, asking her where she is going and how she could take such drastic action, "And on this, your wedding day!" We see her riding away on the Rider's horse to an unknown future with these questions in the back of her mind, much like real life. How I play it in performance is that she is well and truly changed by this experience, crushed but not broken. She rides away alone. Will she return home? The ambiguous ending implies that she will not. (I certainly took it that

way.) Is she brave enough? Does the world in which she lives allow for such freedom? The reality is that she will probably need to return to the safe confines of her village, church, and bridegroom. Is the piece actually acting as a cautionary tale *against* sexual freedom? Or shall we read it from a modern, feminist perspective and see her as a person with a new character, an ability to survive and even conquer a demonic presence represented by the Rider? This is certainly the more powerful reading. The composer deliberately avoided using arch form³¹⁹ in the music in order to leave this ambiguity³²⁰ intact.

Thematically, *The Night Bride* fulfils my intention to create and perform a new collaborative work that shows the inner world of a complete person, who happens to be female, rather than filtering that experience through the eyes of a male character or perspective. The themes of the piece - including female sexuality, rape/sexual domination and power play, victimhood versus survival, throwing off the mantle of traditional gender roles versus following the prescribed path - are all explored phenomenologically, from the perspective of *Anna*, who is changed from her experiences.³²¹ Even in such a short (20-minute) music theatre piece, we see a clear arc within her character.

7.3.2. Collaborative Creation of Anna

7.3.2.1. Music

In working with composer Stephen Kilpatrick, we considered my research considerations (creating a rounded female character and using a variety of vocal styles) and skills set, to include voiceover work. The piece would be soprano vocal

³¹⁹ Kilpatrick (2013), p. 117.

³²⁰ In Kilpatrick's short story (Kilpatrick (2007), p. 95), Anna's transformation is further emphasised by her changing into the Rider's rough fleece clothing and leather riding trousers and boots, leaving behind any trace of the innocent bridal-wear, along with the Rider's severed head dangling from the ancient tree on which hang his previous captive 'Brides'. This is certainly a less ambiguous ending.

³²¹ There were some seminal changes between the short story and the graphic novel adaptation. Kilpatrick's story, inspired by the folk ballad *Molnár Anna*, only implied rape, whereas Sizemore makes Anna's rape explicit in the comic. In the music theatre piece, the rape is back to implication, shown through the fixed medium soundscape. Also, Sizemore ramps up the drama by having his antagonist the Rider start to wake as Anna is about to smite him with his own sword, pressing more towards a hero creation story, whereas Kilpatrick's short story Rider remains asleep - Anna's killing of the Rider is, therefore, not heroic but quiet in its desperation. Kilpatrick has kept Sizemore's more dramatic ending for the music theatre piece, as well as the ambiguousness of Anna's future fate.

range with elements of the Hungarian folk idiom, which I would bring through folk song and Hungarian translation within the fixed medium voiceover section (Narrator), along with the Classical vocal technique within the Contemporary Classical context. Unbeknownst to me, I myself had planted the seed of this work when, on a trip from Budapest to Transylvania with the composer ten years before, I had sung the Hungarian folk song ‘Túl a vízen zörög a jég’ (Across the water the ice is beating).³²² Upon the composer’s request, I transcribed my own interpretation of this song, using my own folk melismas and embellishments I based on interpretations of other Hungarian folk songs by various Hungarian folk singers;³²³ this would become the first aria (Section B), **Figure 17.**, below:

Túl a vízen zörög a jég

Hungarian Folk Song

1. Túl a ví - zen zörög a jég. Túl a ví - zen zörög a jég,

4. Hát, te, Ró - zám, él - hetsz - e még? 2. É - lek,

7. é - lek, de csak e - lig. É - lek, é - lek, de csak e - lig,

10. ná - lad nél - kül las - san - te - lik. 3. Hadd el,

13. Ró - zám, majd el - te - lik. Hadd el, Ró - zám, majd el - tel - ik,

16. vá - rok re - ád esz - ten - dej - 3.ig.

Figure 17. My transcription of Hungarian folk song ‘Túl a vízen zörög a jég’ as I sing it, using folk melismas and ornamentation inspired by singers of the folk tradition.

³²² Kilpatrick (2013), p. 110.

³²³ For example, Beatrix Tárnoki’s ‘Én kimenék küskertembe’ from the Moldavian region of Romania and Kinga Hajdú’s ‘Udvarom közepén’ from the Gyimes region, heard on Folk Műhely Alkotóközösség (Folk Workshop Hungary) (1997) *Újélő népzene 1. (Living Village Music)* [CD] Pál Havasréti. These performances feature extensive, traditional embellishments, including *appoggiature*, grace notes, and melismas that extend vowels.

I used odd bars fluctuating between 3/4 and 7/8, with pauses for free ornamentation, in the appropriate style. I attempted to get as accurate notation of my interpretation of the folk song as possible, whilst also making use of Bartók's *parlando rubato*, which he used in the notation of *Bluebeard's Castle*,³²⁴ in this case, Bartók's 'hardened rubato'.³²⁵ This notational style implies knowledge of the rhythms of the Hungarian language for expressive freedom,³²⁶ which I hoped the English language score would retain and which I could bring to its interpretation in performance. Kilpatrick worked to maintain the rubato style in his writing to give more freedom to the performers:

...the instrumental and vocal material [of *The Night Bride*] does draw heavily on the decorative approach of Hungarian folk singing and the rubato inherent in the genre. Both cimbalom and soprano are awarded a significant degree of freedom in the execution of their lines in terms of rubato, which breaks with the tyranny of what Wishart refers to as the lattice (1996, p. 23), in that, the expressive freedom of the past that Wishart feels has been composed out of music through notation's finitistic approach is returned to the performer.³²⁷

I originally transcribed the song as Bartók would have, in a key that meant that the notes remained mainly within the stave/staff.³²⁸ This meant I had written it in G major/D minor. If sung in the true folk style,³²⁹ it should be sung down the octave. This also helps with the clarity of language. However, the composer preferred the higher range for the Vienna world premiere (2012), requiring a Classical technique. Sung operatically, the *tessitura* of the section made understanding lyrics difficult, so I was happy when composer Steve Kilpatrick allowed the piece to be sung down the octave at the Salford, UK premiere (2014) with Enrico Bertelli,³³⁰ making the piece sound clearer and more visceral. It also set up the story well, stylistically and in terms of clear narrative from the audience's point of view. This also suited the way I transposed my own singing of the folk song on which it was based ('Túl a vízen zörög a jég'); I had written it in G major to follow Bartók's method of writing in the key that fits onto the stave to avoid too many ledger lines. The composer had originally

³²⁴ Frigyesi (1998), p. 236.

³²⁵ Frigyesi (1998), p. 238. "[Bartók's] 'Hardened rubato' meant metric rhythm that was not subject to substantial change in performance but still gave the impression of rubato – supposedly because of the irregular rhythmic formations and certain subtle rubato quality of the performing style."

³²⁶ Frigyesi (1998), p. 240.

³²⁷ Kilpatrick (2013), p. 118.

³²⁸ Frigyesi (1998), p. 238.

³²⁹ Using 'thick folds', otherwise known as using 'chest' quality.

³³⁰ See **Appendix 1. Video 6.** for video of the UK performance.

thought, understandably, that I had written it in a key best suited to my voice. Upon evaluation of both versions now, however, I can concede that the composer had been right to choose the operatic style, which brings a greater sense of drama, vehemence, and urgency, sounding closer to a scream than the chest singing does, certainly in the key of G.

Another collaborative element is that the composer specifically created the cimbalom part based on transformations of my very individual embellishments, rather than the existing folk song, see **Figure 18.**, below:

3

27

S. *girl* ³ I am not that *girl*, I am not that *girl*.

Cim.

Tape

CUE TAPE SECTION 2 from "GIRL" soprano's line: "I am not that GIRL"

31

S.

Cim.

mp *mf* *mp*

p *Red.*

Tape

TAPE SECTION 2 continues

Figure 18. The decorations in the cimbalom part at bars 33-35 mirror the vocal line above, bars 27-31.³³¹

In other words, the cimbalom music, for example as in **Figure 18.** above, flowed out from transformations of my personal embellishments, rather than directly from the original folk melody itself. This element is truly collaborative in the creation of the sound world. I also contributed to the process of setting the text.

³³¹ Kilpatrick (2013), p. 120-121.

7.3.2.2. Word Settings

Wilson (2015) worked closely with composer T Benjamin to create music theatre / opera piece ‘Silent Jack’ and, therefore, had input into several compositional elements, including word setting. She highlights the importance of melismatic writing and for vowels to work well for clarity and the *tessitura* of the voice. Similarly, in working with the composer, I made several suggestions on word settings, some of which he took on, while rejecting others. For example, regarding some difficult diphthongs and triphthongs at high ranges, I suggested lower or alternative melody lines. Specifically, in the words “wild ride”, there are several consonants, including Ls, which can be difficult to sing at height. “Wild” alone contains three vowels (thriphthong) and a semi-vowel - u-a-i-uhl, and “ride” has two vowels (diphthong) and a semi-vowel - er-a-i. Further, on A5, it can be difficult to understand the text (see **Figure 19.**, below):

5

Figure 19 is a musical score snippet from an opera. It consists of two systems of music. The first system starts at measure 57 and ends at measure 62. The second system starts at measure 63 and ends at measure 68. Each system has a vocal line (S.) and a cimbal line (Cim.). The vocal line in the first system has the lyrics 'The for-est en - snares us, the dark-ness hides our' and ends with a high note on 'our'. The vocal line in the second system has the lyrics 'wild ride. He will be my fine' and ends with a high note on 'fine'. The cimbal line provides accompaniment with various chords and melodic lines. Dynamics include *mf* (mezzo-forte) and *f* (forte). A double bar line is present between measures 62 and 63.

Figure 19: The darkness hides our wild ride. “WILD RIDE” is on a high A (A5).

There are similar considerations with **Figure 20.**, where the words “Night Bride” also feature complex vowel and consonant configurations - Na-i-t + (schwa) and B + (schwa)-ra-e-i-d + (schwa):

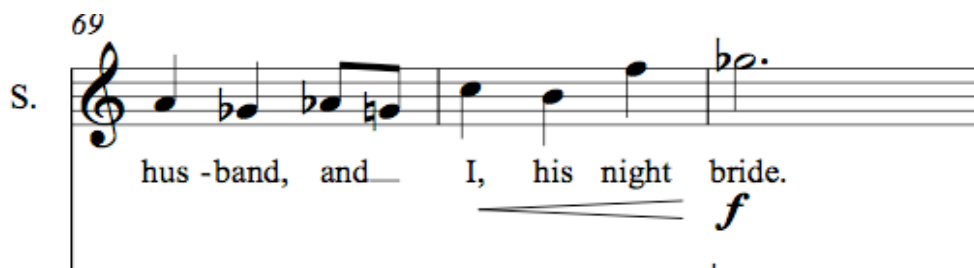


Figure 20. NIGHT BRIDE is on F5, Gb5, bar 70-71.

In both cases, I suggested taking each phrase down an octave to make the text clearer, as there is only one opportunity to hear the text, unlike in opera, where repetition is prevalent. However, the composer was clear that he was more interested in the musical line and liked the high *tessitura* of the voice, feeling that it brought out the heightened emotion and drama of the situation, following on from Margaret Wilkins’ (2006) assertion that composers must consider their choice of text based on priority of function, such as intelligibility versus mood or atmosphere required.³³² Kilpatrick’s assertion was that the words must serve the music here, rather than music serving the text.

Some word setting suggestions that the composer did take on came from my experience with traditional Classical repertoire. For example, there were times when an anacrusis was more appropriate due to the word stress required for a phrase. Compare the original, which emphasises less stressed words “of” and “and”, **Figure 21.**, with my new setting, where “wonder” and “joy” are given greater stress due to the altered word setting on strong beats, **Figure 22.:**

³³² Wilkins (2006), p. 201.

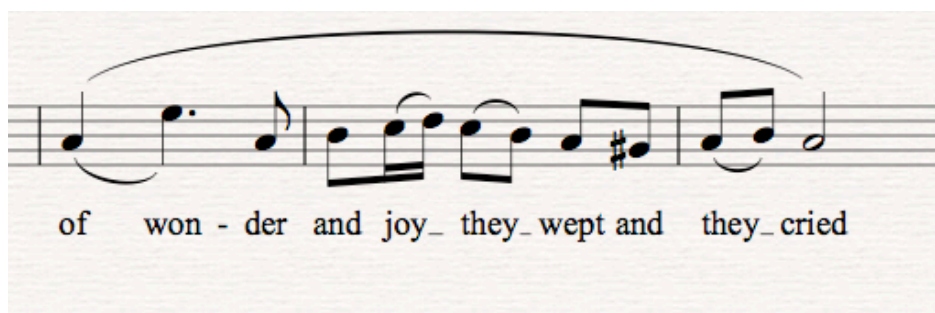


Figure 21. Initial setting of the text at bar 115.

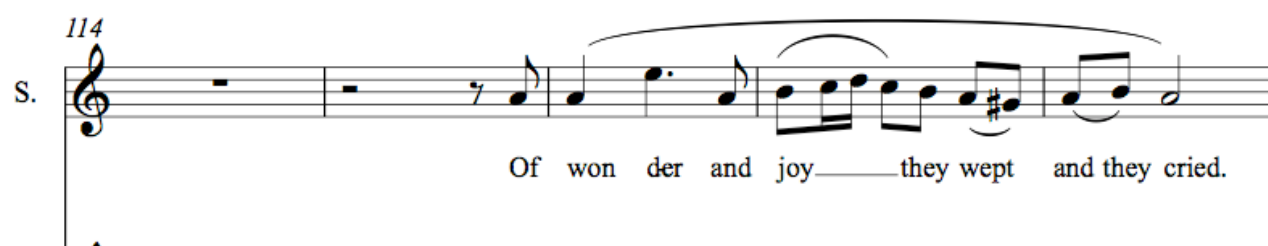


Figure 22. Putting “of” in the anacrusis helped emphasise main words “wonder” and “joy”, bars 115-117.

I also suggested a word addition for the phrase “The women that I knew”, changing it to “All the women that I knew” to suit the musical phrase better, rather than emphasising a naturally unemphasised word (“the”), which was originally slurred from the dotted crotchet (quarter note) to the quaver (eighth note). Compare:

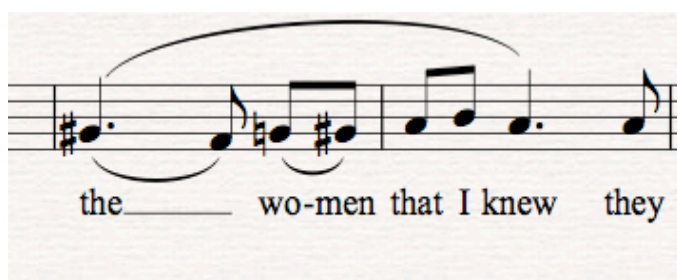


Figure 23. Initial setting of the text at bar 107.

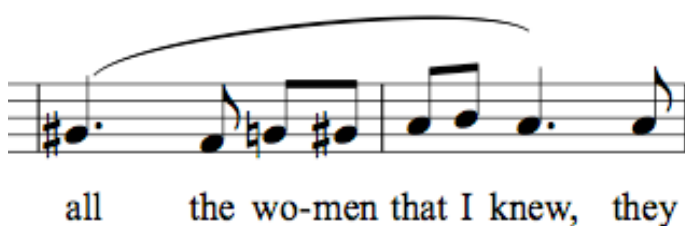


Figure 24. My addition of “all” at bar 107 removed the emphasis from “the”, bringing the phrase closer to natural speech, without losing the musical line.

These new settings I suggested made no significant change to the melody lines, retaining the integrity of the composer's musical intention, something Wilson (2015) underlines in her discussion of collaboration with composer T Benjamin:

How you explain vocal limitations or the importance of a word setting change must come from a place of respect for the integrity of the composer's work. I make sure I explain with clear reasoning, rather than just playing the 'diva' and saying, "I can't do that." If you explain why and offer workable solutions, it makes for a better collaborative experience for both yourself as the singer and the composer. You both feel respected.³³³

With this in mind, I did not want to change everything because part of Stephen Kilpatrick's style and charm is the unusual rhythms and word settings, as I experienced singing in his opera *Flight Paths*. I also was able to contribute to the fixed medium via the Hungarian language, as well as the vocal treatment of some of the recorded text.

7.3.2.3. Hungarian Text Translation and Vocal Treatment (Fixed Medium)

Hungarian is a beautifully percussive and very different sounding language to English, which can create a contrasting texture. I translated parts of the English libretto to Hungarian upon the composer's request, the recording of which he used to dovetail into the English narration, giving the piece the desired Hungarian 'feeling' while still being comprehensible to an English-speaking audience.

Musical/textural underlay within the text:

I suggested during voiceover recording to have textural highlighting through layering the voice beneath the Narrator's clear text, to highlight spoken phrases. For example, at p. 12 of the final score:

Anna, where are you going?...
Anna, who have you become?³³⁴

and

³³³ Wilson (2011-2015)

³³⁴ Kilpatrick 2014 p. 10. (final score).

You were snatched by the devil,
The Rider from Hell.

Both of these phrases I sang with a partial melody from Section II (“As the horse kicks below me”); the composer and I agreed this added to the gothic horror and otherworldliness of these sections:

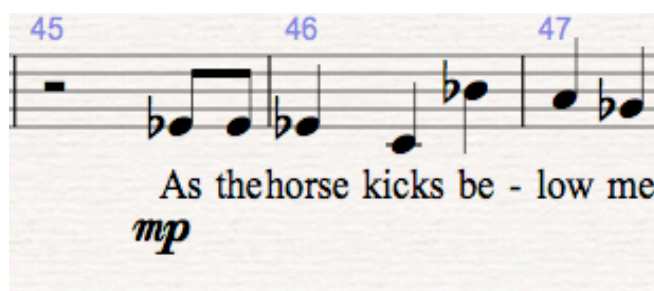


Figure 25. The melody from bars 45-47 that I suggested for underlay of spoken text in *The Night Bride*'s fixed medium.

I also gave textural textual highlights with a different voice quality, for example:

This tree and its fruit, have they driven you insane?
→*Insane* (using a breathy, whispered voice quality)

During the recording of the fixed medium, I was also able to interpret and co-create several characters using a variety of vocal qualities.

7.3.2.4. Voiceover Characters, Voice Qualities (Fixed Medium)

In planning *The Night Bride*, Kilpatrick wrote, “Only Anna's part will be sung, the rest will be pre-recorded. The narrator should have a distinct character, as should each of the three previous wives”.³³⁵ With this in mind, when the piece was written, I worked to find individuality within each character, from the two distinct narrative voices to the three Brides during the recording process, which I created through various vocal qualities. Characters included the ‘Cautionary Conscience’, which librettist Mike Sizemore calls Anna’s inner voice:

...Anna is also an internal monologue given life so its (sic) this conversation to herself about the past and present that enables her to carve (literally) a very

³³⁵ Kilpatrick email (9 May 2012).

different future from the one that the fairy-tale had in mind for her. Giving that voice 'voice' in the libretto was the obvious way to go.³³⁶

The writing for the cautionary conscience voice featured non-rhyming lines and irregular rhythm, such as at p.1 in the score:

Anna, why did he take you? Anna, who is this man?
And on this of all days! A day that you dreamed of!
Anna, aren't you listening? Anna, aren't you scared?

I imagined this as the cautioning voice of the townspeople, including Anna's mother, who want to maintain the *status quo*, as well as protect Anna from outside influences. To create this character, I used a tilted larynx³³⁷ for a whimpering voice. With a breathy quality and gasping for breath I gave the impression of urgency and of whispering in the dark, as if to avoid being overheard by the threatening presence of the Rider. This can be heard on the demo recording (**Appendix 1. Audio 2**) at (0:43-0:55). The freer rhythm and lack of rhyme differentiates the 'Cautionary Conscience'/Anna's inner voice from the storytelling Narrator, who describes the action, using poetic language, including rhyming and consistent rhythmic quality, for example, at p. 6 of the score:

The clearing is ancient,
The tree older still.
Nothing grows near it,
Nor ever it will.

For the Narrator, I employed an assured, low voice, dramatically colouring words as needed. For example, after Section B, in "The blood red sky", I emphasise the words by slowing in tempo and lengthening the B and the L of the word 'blood', bringing out the thematic element of blood, which appears throughout the text, as well as musically (the composer used the 'blood motif'³³⁸ of minor seconds from Bartók's *Bluebeard's Castle* as inspiration³³⁹ in Section C, for example.). The blood theme can also be seen in the graphic novel by David Kennedy (**Appendix 13**). This vocal quality can be heard in the demo at 02:22-02:43, 04:45-05:40 and 09:42-10:24

³³⁶ Sizemore (2015), email correspondence, 7 June.

³³⁷ See Glossary.

³³⁸ Grant (1991), p. 28.

³³⁹ Kilpatrick (2013), p. 126.

(Appendix 1. Audio 2.). It was important to differentiate the speaking characters within the story, which include the Brides.

To create the character of ‘Morning’, I used a breathy, juddering, choked quality, with a slow tempo and long, sticky consonants, as if moving her mouth is a struggle. She is also struggling to speak through her broken larynx: “He choked the life out from me, /And my poor heart, it did burst!” The composer treated the voice to raise the pitch to give a very young quality, giving an even stronger sense of the macabre and of her lost innocence. This can be heard on the demo at (10:24-10:52). For the friendly and innocent voice of ‘Day’, I recorded a warm, laughing voice (tilted larynx).³⁴⁰ Her line, “I’m Day, my pretty. So pleased that you’re here,” was delivered with a smile and a sing-song quality, using a wider range of the spoken range undulating up and down, mimicking the double smile the Rider has given her. In terms of treatment, the composer used an echo to indicate the double voice where Day was “cut from ear to ear.”³⁴¹ This voice quality can be heard on the demo at (11:00-11:06). To characterise ‘Evening’, described as guttural in the libretto, I used some distortion in the voice (vocal fry)³⁴² and growling. The lowered range of the composer’s digital treatment helped emphasise the elderly, decaying quality of the corpse’s voice, which can be heard at (11:13-11:39). Anna’s outward voice, which shares her feelings with the audience, receives the musical treatment in the form of four separate arias, Sections A, C, D, E, and F.

As mentioned in the Music section, these arias I sang using Classical technique, with the exception of the UK premiere, where I also brought in chest quality in the initial aria, set to the folk song tune I had transcribed.

7.3.2.5. Acting, Costume and Dance – Anna

In making performance choices, including costume, dance movement and vocal characterisation, I was able to refer to a range of stimuli: the libretto, musical treatment - in which I had consulted and contributed - as well as the comic book

³⁴⁰ See Glossary.

³⁴¹ Kilpatrick (2013), p. 124.

³⁴² See Glossary.

which was originally part of the collaborative creation process between the composer, artist and librettist. David Kennedy's *The Night Bride* graphic novel acted as stimulus for creation of Anna via its influence on the music, as well as a visual indication of costume and acting choices I could make. His art is refreshingly realistic in its presentation of female characters. Indeed, he talks about how some commissioners of comic art have asked him to redraw his female characters to give them a "sweeter ass".³⁴³ This highlights the relevance of the feminist discussion of 'male gaze', as well as de Beauvoir's (1949) discussion of the embodiment of women in various media as objectified.³⁴⁴

Kennedy actively rejects this 'male gaze' objectification, seeing his characters as active, fully-rounded people, rather than as pure 'eye candy'.³⁴⁵ His depiction of Anna continues in this vein. She is slight, and her breasts and bottom, which are typically hyper-exaggerated in comic art, are normally-sized. The simple, peasant wedding attire she wears, which becomes tattered and torn during her experiences, is always tastefully presented, as in **Figure 26.**, below:



Figure 26. David Kennedy's character study of *Anna* from *The Night Bride*.

³⁴³ Kennedy (2014), Personal conversation.

³⁴⁴ De Beauvoir (2010/1949).

³⁴⁵ See Krisztianna's depiction of this dichotomy between titillating, posed comic depictions of the female form versus the female who is shown in action and wearing clothing that is practical for the task at hand, i.e. active versus passive. Krisztianna (2012), blog.

In other words, Anna's breasts and bottom remain suitably covered so that the emphasis may remain on her inner world in relation to her outer experience with the Rider and the Brides, rather than the reader's titillation, as is common in comic art.

In choosing costume for Anna, I referred to Kennedy's drawings for a generic folk look, choosing cream cotton folk-like top similar to Hungarian embroidered blouses and long cream, cotton skirt. In the premiere, I had my hair half tied up, as Anna has in the comic, but I added a veil in the UK premiere to indicate the 'bride' element, as in **Image 5.**, below:



Image 5. In costume as *Anna* at the world premiere in Vienna, with Tim Williams of Psappha Ensemble (cimbalom). (*The Night Bride*). Photo by Stephen Kilpatrick, 2012.

In creating Anna's movement choreography, especially during the rape scene, I was influenced by the stylised Radiophonics tape treatment, which layers and distorts birdsong, for example, to symbolise the distortion of Anna's view of sex, described by her mother, aunties and village women as "wedding nights golden and new" full of "wonder and joy". The composer (2013) says,

In the comic book version of *The Night Bride*, the transformation of Anna from naive girl to woman is reflected in the gradual transformation of the panels from daytime to night-time colouring. This is reflected sonically in the opening "tape" section, which establishes the atmosphere of the forest in daytime with

field recording of birdsong from a Transylvania forest. The transformation of day into night begins at 2:42 with the forest bird's call being transformed into the mysterious "night music" of the forest after dark. This process is repeated more emphatically at 4:18.³⁴⁶

He also emphasises the importance of the birdsong distortion:

The bird is foregrounded ... [in] another important appearance...during Anna's rape at 6:28 when the narrator asks, in Hungarian, "Nem félsz?" (Aren't you afraid?) There is some ambiguity to the significance of the bird at this point. Does it signify the freedom of the soul even under oppression, as it is suggested in Trevor Wishart's *Red Bird*? Or is it perhaps suggesting that something is flying away and being lost, such as Anna's innocence? Perhaps it merely signifies Anna's fragility and weakness at this point in the story.³⁴⁷

I discussed with the composer how I personally interpreted the distortion of the birdsong, which he quotes:

To me, it's how, under stress and adrenaline, you really focus and hold onto one sound, perhaps trying to escape the horror of what is actually happening, a way to dissociate. It's like how your pupils dilate, smells are stronger and sounds become really loud.³⁴⁸

It is with this in mind that I created the movement, especially the facial expression and posture, to create the embodiment of Anna. Certain gestures indicate Anna's innocence, like tilting her head while looking up through her eyelashes and biting her lip, lifting her ribcage to meet the Rider's own, and bending one knee to create an inviting curve of the hip, hinted at in my initial movement notes:

III. THE TREE (tape)

Look up innocently, bite lip

Rape section: "he means to take her once more":

Hopeful, eager, innocent 'reached for his rough flesh' - hand out.

These movements can be seen on the UK premiere **Video** at (05:03-06:03).³⁴⁹ When the Rider rapes Anna, which can best be seen at the Vienna world premiere

³⁴⁶ Kilpatrick (2013), p. 114

³⁴⁷ Kilpatrick (2013), p. 115.

³⁴⁸ A. Tóth, personal correspondence 8 April 2008 quoted in Kilpatrick (2013), p. 115.

³⁴⁹ See **Appendix 1. Video 6.** for the UK premiere **video**.

performance **Video** (05:23-07:47),³⁵⁰ I needed to transform innocent Anna, so I used facial expressions to bring out her horror during the ordeal, as well as body contortions to turn away from the Rider's aggression. A costume transformation also takes place. As the tape underlay is stylised and the transformation must happen a short time period of 60 seconds, rather than in real time, I chose movement in slow motion to reflect this:

Slow motion: rumple hair, mess makeup, untie top, pull out

"Nem félsz?" Turn away suddenly.

Pant. Drop limbs. Rag doll. --> (CUE CIMBALOM)³⁵¹

While the above notes indicate movements, the emotional quality of these in performance had to reflect the trauma Anna was experiencing. The hair rumpling is almost pulling it out at the roots and the result is extreme dishevelment. I smear my makeup slowly but violently, stretch the white cotton blouse and contort my spine before dropping my posture like a rag doll (Vienna video 05:23-07:47, **Appendix 1. Video 5.**). In the Salford performance, the removal of my leather belt shows a removal of a final barrier of Anna's innocence. As the cimbalom cues Anna's return from the trancelike state where adrenaline, fear and shame have overcome her, I show this return by slowly turning my face to the audience as Anna sings, "Is this what I welcomed?" (**Appendix 1. Video 6.**).

After seeing the Brides strung in the ancient tree, I show Anna's regaining of her wits by tucking in my top, smoothing my hair and raising my collapsed posture, during the aria, Section E. (See Vienna video at 12:02-12:38 **Appendix 1. Video 5.**). In other words, Salzman and Desi (2006)'s definition of new music theatre certainly this piece fits here, as "music, language, vocalization [sic], and physical movement...interact in some kind of equality but performed by different performers and in a different social ambience than works normally categorized [sic] as operas (performed by opera singers in opera houses) or musicals (performed by theater singers in "legitimate" theaters)".³⁵² While the movement and voice I used are stylised, for example in the

³⁵⁰ See **Appendix 1. Video 5.** for the world premiere **video**.

³⁵¹ Process notes, 2012.

³⁵² Salzman and Desi (2008) p.5.

slow motion movement and Classical singing voice, this suits the music theatre style's heightened reality already established by the composer's use of distorted sound in the fixed medium (tape), as well as its inspiration from the stylised comic book version. What is contrasting to traditional forms is that this story is told mostly by Anna in movement and singing, as well as by her inner voice (the 'Cautionary Conscience').

7.3.2.6. Performance Preparation – Challenges and Solutions

The process of creation was emotionally exhausting because the material required so much focus, concentration and emotional investment during the learning process, which included singing, acting and movement all being created and then learnt at once. This process was undertaken alone, which contrasted with previous experiences, where I had outside direction and dramaturgical input. Living through the emotional turmoil during the creation process informed the performance, however, and I could embody and communicate the emotional experience of Anna as a result.

A helpful tool was the demo version of the piece (**Appendix 1. Audio 2.**), which Kilpatrick and I recorded for my own practice.³⁵³ This was especially important, as we knew we would have a limited amount of rehearsal time with the cimbalom player Tim Williams. Indeed, with the percussionist, I had a single stumble-through in Manchester, then in Vienna we had about one hour of rehearsal time due to scheduling constraints at the venue and to Williams' necessary focus on the tuning of the slightly battered cimbalom, which took several hours. Further, the demo version allowed me to familiarise myself with the fixed medium cues which did not appear in the initial score. Elliott (2006)³⁵⁴ mentions the importance, as a learning tool, of midi (or in this case live) realisations of new works, as does Wilson (2015), as increasingly new works are allotted less and less rehearsal time, due to financial and time limitations - this was the case with *The Night Bride*, as well as *Flight Paths*, *Mary, Polly, Sukey, Jack and Jill, to the wider ocean*. (In the case of *ELEGEIA* (for Anna), the midi version was a requirement throughout the process, as the electroacoustic

³⁵³ Although there is a slight early entry in the vocal line in Section C, which requires rerecording.

³⁵⁴ Elliott (2006), p. 299.

‘accompaniment’ was half of the piece that is intermeshed with my live vocal performance.) It is common knowledge that the big opera classics, such as Bizet’s *Carmen*, are more likely to be staged than new, small works of music theatre simply because of audience appeal. This has repercussions on creators of new music theatre in that they must work within tight budgets and often take more commercial work, leaving less time for development of new works. Funded works, such as Ariel Dorfman’s/Nigel Osborne’s *Naciketa* with Opera Circus, work to include several cultures and people with disabilities to create community art with a healing function. The *Naciketa* project has been in production since 2010 and looks to become a large-scale work³⁵⁵ due to its outreach into communities. However, art for art’s sake remains on a budget.

7.4. Output and Conclusion

The 2012 world premiere performance took place in Vienna at Alte Schmiede with Tim Williams of Psappha Ensemble on cimbalom. The UK premiere was in Peel Hall during the April 2014 Salford Sonic Fusion Festival, accompanied by Enrico Bertelli on vibraphone.³⁵⁶ In *The Night Bride*, Anna is the subject, the human being, as opposed to being the other, the obstacle, the foil or plot device, in contrast to de Lauretis’ assertion.³⁵⁷ My performance of the piece responds to Pasler and McClary’s call for music theatre works that come from the point of view of the female protagonist, rather than viewing from the outside a stereotypical construct. I have shown how, building on Bosma’s view of the performer as co-creator, I have created the fleshed out character of Anna based on the stimuli of the libretto, music, visual elements such as costume and acting and movement skills. Depicting Anna’s quest is also a further step in my personal quest for embodying and communicating characters using greater emotive expression on stage. I have also built upon collaborative processes used by current vocal practitioners, such as Taylor Wilson and Nadine Benjamin (formerly Mortimer-Smith).

³⁵⁵ Benjamin (2011-2015), in person.

³⁵⁶ See **Appendix 11**. for *The Night Bride* programme notes.

³⁵⁷ de Lauretis pp.118-119, quoted in McClary (1991), p. 14.

Chapter Eight: *ELEGEIA* (for Anna) for electroacoustic tape and live vocals

8.1. Overview

ELEGEIA (for Anna), (original working title *The Folk Female*), is a 10-minute electroacoustic tape and live vocals piece which I developed and co-composed with electroacoustic composer Nikos Stavropoulos. The project began in March 2012 and was completed in June 2013. Musically, it is inspired by folk elements from both Hungarian and Greek cultures, to reflect the cultural background of the composers Anikó Tóth (Hungarian) and Nikos Stavropoulos (Greek), as well as extended vocal sounds I explored, including harmonics singing³⁵⁸ inspired by Tuvan traditional singing; I will discuss how I hybridised and re-contextualised the vocal techniques from the original vocal stimuli. Salzman (2002) says that “It is striking that the most significant tape and electronic pieces of the 1950s and early 1960s use the human voice... as an essential part of the conception: Stockhausen’s *Gesang der Jünglinge* (1955-56), Berio’s *Omaggio a Joyce* (1958) and *Visage* (1961), Babbitt’s ... *Philomel* (1964)”.³⁵⁹ In creating *ELEGEIA*, we are building upon some of the collaborative and vocal techniques used by the above composers and their vocalist collaborators.

In contrast to these pieces, however, which feature the electronic treatment of the voice in a fixed medium (Stockhausen treats a young boy’s singing voice in *Gesang der Jünglinge*, and Berio treats Cathy Berberian’s read interpretation of Joyce’s Ulysses in *Omaggio* and Berberian’s extended ‘human’ sounds in *Visage*, an inspiration for *ELEGEIA*) our piece uses both the live and electronic elements. In this sense, our piece builds on Babbitt’s soprano and synthesised tape piece *Philomel* in that it was originally written for a particular singer - Bethany Beardslee, and the tape part was also created from her voice. Elliott (2006) says that, “Anyone who performs the work now and rents the tape from the publisher sings with Bethany’s voice”.³⁶⁰ *ELEGEIA*’s electroacoustic tape part was also built entirely from my vocal improvisations from the initial recording session. The above composers appropriate these performers’ vocal performances to create their pieces using electronic

³⁵⁸ See Glossary.

³⁵⁹ Salzman (2002), p. 153.

³⁶⁰ Elliott (2006) p. 296.

manipulation, which Bosma and others (e.g. Abbate and Halfyard) assert are collaborative compositions. I worked very closely as commissioner and co-composer with Nikos Stavropoulos to choose stimuli that were of joint interest, both parties bringing cultural and musical elements to create this highly personal piece exploring personal grief. Further, if we assert that improvisation is ‘composition in the present moment’, I am composing each time I perform *ELEGEIA* live on stage using the freedom of improvisation I left for myself in the graphic score, which features sections of structured improvisation (similar to Jan Kopinski’s *MIRRORS* (2006),³⁶¹ and my own synaesthetic graphic notation, similar to Wishart’s *Anticredos* score).³⁶² I will discuss how the evolving score played a crucial part of the compositional and collaborative aspects of the creation of this work. I will also discuss how, by performing this expressive piece based also on grief sounds, I create the embodiment of the emotional/emotive female protagonist, in which section I will also highlight the attribution problem still prevalent in today’s electroacoustic community, based on Bosma’s (and Halfyard’s) query.

8.2. Research Context

8.2.1. A Quest for Emotional Expression

In my personal quest for greater emotional expression, I was interested in exploring my personal sense of grief, anger and loss during the period of 2011-2013. To start the enquiry, I explored extended vocal sounds in reaction to a visual stimulus that seemed to express my feelings at the time: graphic novel *100 Months* by John Hicklenton,³⁶³ where goddess Mara goes on a killing rampage, mourning man’s treatment of the world due to greed. I created an original interpretation of how Mara’s voice might sound – low, gravelly, nasal, overly breathy – based on Hicklenton’s (quite violent, mostly blood red, black and white) images. (**Appendix 1. Audio 3.**) Inspired by the graphic novel, I also created a palette of sixteen extended sounds, which systematically explored different parts of the vocal apparatus (such as voiced and unvoiced sounds from the larynx in a variety of postures, e.g. vocal fry, cry/tilt;

³⁶¹ See **Appendix 2.** for *Mirrors* score excerpt.

³⁶² Wishart (1996), pp. 281-282.

³⁶³ Hicklenton, John (2010) *100 Months*. London, Cutting Edge Press.

soft palate – inhaled vocal fry with open and closed nasal port; and teeth and tongue).³⁶⁴ (**Appendix 1. Audio 4.**)

I sent these recordings to composer Nikos Stavropoulos as an initial stimulus for exploring the vocal expression of grief, anger and loss in January 2012. With the *Extended Sounds* recording, I sent a key with rudimentary graphic notation (**Appendix 14. 12.14.1.**), inspired by my synaesthetic interpretation of the sounds and previous exploration of graphic notation in original piece *Vocalise/Vocal Wheeze* (2008/2012) (**Appendix 3.**). As our discussions developed, I wanted to hybridise a new expressive palette of emotionally-charged, liminal human sounds in the vein of Luciano Berio's tape piece *Visage* (1961),³⁶⁵ created solely from recording sessions with virtuoso vocalist Cathy Berberian. I also listened to live solo vocal piece *Sequenza III* (1966), which Berio wrote "for and about Cathy" based on the *Visage* material, which Berberian called "an x-ray of a woman's life".³⁶⁶ *Sequenza III* explores the liminal human sounds, perhaps involuntary, 'emotional outburst' sounds, that occur when one is expressing intense emotions, the changes in the score categorised by Istvan Anhalt (1984) with relation to psycholinguistics and language behaviour.³⁶⁷ Halfyard (2004) presents this categorisation in terms of emotional states by their description in the score: "A - tense" includes tense, urgent, nervous, intense, apprehensive; "B - anxious" includes relieved, bewildered, whining, whimpering, anxious, gasping and desperate; "C - hyperactive" is made up of witty, giddy, ecstatic, excited and coy, while sections "D - dreamy" and "E - serene" include terms wistful and serene, respectively.³⁶⁸ I was most interested in "A - tense" and "B - anxious" elements, but also extending the emotions to sorrow and loss in my own vocal exploration. I will discuss this in greater detail later. *Visage* uses very few words, most notably the Italian word for 'word' (*parole*), with some other words among the texture of emotive sounds generated by Cathy Berberian.³⁶⁹ Indeed, in

³⁶⁴ See Glossary for a breakdown of these terms.

³⁶⁵ Can be heard at: TheWelleszCompany. (Uploaded on Feb 15, 2011). *Visage (1961) by Luciano Berio*. [Online] <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8mxGHXCMPcM>, viewed 12 Feb 2012 and 24 Jan 2014.

³⁶⁶ Anhalt (1984), p. 40.

³⁶⁷ Anhalt (1984), p. 27.

³⁶⁸ Halfyard (2004), p. 7.

³⁶⁹ Halfyard (2004), p. 5: "One of the often repeated 'facts' about *Visage* is that there is only one real word in the entire piece, the word *parole*, words. I strongly suspect that Berio only had this one word he asked Berberian to use in the piece, and from that has grown the myth that every other vocal sound in the piece is a nonsense syllable – a myth easily dispelled by listening to the piece where a

Sequenza III a poem is used, but its words are secondary to the vocal exploration taking place; mumbling, repeated syllables, laughter (which can sound nervous to maniacal), et cetera, are used out of context to create a sound palette that, because of their usual context, take the audience on an emotional rollercoaster, our minds filling in what the performer may be feeling, meaning, expressing.

Of great interest to me were the distillation of emotionally-driven sounds *between* the words and the use of very few words;³⁷⁰ the words represent the conscious self, making way for the more deeply human elements of mourning through extended sounds, to include howling and vocal fry³⁷¹ (as explored in *Vocalise/Vocal Wheeze* (2008-2012)). My intention with using these emotionally-charged elements in a live vocal and electroacoustic tape piece was to evoke an emotional response in the audience, and perhaps even bring them into an altered state of emotional experience. This is part of the creation of the fully-human female protagonist of which I will write later. In addition, we looked at culturally-coded musical stimuli to create our sound world.

8.2.2. Contextual Background: Music, Media, and Repertoire

In October 2011, initial consultations for a collaborative piece with composer Nikos Stavropoulos began. As one intention of the project was to hybridise a range of culturally-coded vocal styles, focusing on our personal³⁷² Hungarian and Greek cultures, the working title of which was *The Folk Female*. Exchanges of media sources of culturally-coded vocal practices initially created a bed of context from which to develop our piece.

variety of words, including *verita*, truth, and *caro*, darling, are clearly discernable in Berberian's improvised language but are not 'officially' there because they come from the vocalist rather than the composer."

³⁷⁰ There is a sense that, during the mourning process, the performer 'loses speech' (therefore, perhaps losing the self into emotions), as short phrases are repeated, and then these 'other' vocalisations take over. In '*ELEGEIA*', the piece *begins* instead with these 'other' sounds, which become expanded throughout the piece. The repetition of text begins to appear in the folk melody section of '*ELEGEIA*', essentially working backwards to the *Miroloi* structure. These elements will be discussed in the next section.

³⁷¹ See Glossary.

³⁷² This personal exploration and re-contextualisation is an essential part of the intention of this portfolio, which was part of the collaborative projects. This is tied into the fully-human female protagonist element that I intended to embody using fodder from my personal cultural reference points as well as those of my collaborators'.

Our discussion began with Greek urban folk-pop style *Rebetika* from the mid-twentieth century, as the composer suggested a new interpretation of existing *Rebetika* piece ‘Orestis technis po’ kara’ on which he had already begun working. *Rebetika* is the Greek equivalent of singing the blues of socially excluded people in urban ghettos, developed in Greece from the early 1900s.³⁷³ Themes explored city living and alienation. Songs themes were from a personal perspective, rather than exploring themes from afar.³⁷⁴ *Rebetika* singing seems to have been dominated by men, with the female singers going against traditional gender roles to perform in this style.³⁷⁵ Indeed, the style called for a particular graveliness, or, as Vamvakaris calls it, “ ‘metal’,”³⁷⁶ an unsentimental toughness that suited the new style”.³⁷⁷ Holst-Warhaft (2003) finds it “...interesting to speculate whether the singers themselves may have provided a model for the songs about daring or unusual women”.³⁷⁸ I found these ‘daring female’ elements to be interesting in researching the *Rebetika* route, suggesting strong characterisation for a culturally-based female protagonist.³⁷⁹

Stavropoulos and I discussed how we could make the *Rebetika* piece unique through musical and electroacoustic treatment. Ideas included expanding the ensemble, expanding, modifying or corrupting the vocal line, adding an electroacoustic tape section or live electronics, as well as dance or movement. However, the style of the piece was so historically established and rooted in the lyrical themes and musical structure³⁸⁰ that an adaptation of the piece left little room for the creative exploration of emotions, music and vocal techniques I personally was seeking; for example, I was more interested in working with improvisation so that I could have more personal compositional input, in line with my intentions of creating a piece that presented a fully-human female. This led us to look at *Rebetika* improvisations called *Amannes*.

³⁷³ Holst-Warhaft (2003).

³⁷⁴ Holst-Warhaft (2003), p. 185.

³⁷⁵ Ibid., p.187.

³⁷⁶ This “metal” graveliness appears in Diamanda Galás’s voice.

³⁷⁷ Kazantzakis (1965), pp. 324-30 referenced in Holst-Warhaft (2003), p. 176.

³⁷⁸ Holst-Warhaft (2003), p. 187.

³⁷⁹ For example, in one song by Papazoglou called ‘Dervisena’ (Dervish Woman), the character is unabashed and daring, saying, “I’m a wildcat, a goodtime (sic) girl, and I like to smoke hashish./That’s why I got a nickname: they call me the dervish lover.” Even in the ‘man’s world’ of *Rebetika* singing, there seems to be an underlying admiration for the female protagonist’s ‘disdain for societal norms’. *Markos Vamvakaris, 1932-40*, vol. 3 [CD] quoted in Holst-Warhaft (2003), p. 185.

³⁸⁰ The lyrics consist of a teasing argument between a man and a woman, where they list each other’s faults in a long, strophic form.

Amannes are influenced by melismatic Turkic singing.³⁸¹ They were '...usually based... on a melancholic or nostalgic quatrain...[like its Turkish equivalent the *gaze*]...interspersed with exclamations of *aman!* (mercy!)'.³⁸² The most common of the thirty-five *makams* (modes) used for *Amannes* is the *makam Saba*,³⁸³ as in **Figure 27.**, below:



Figure 27. The *makam Saba* (scale).³⁸⁴

The *Amannes* were an interesting resource from an emotional standpoint, being very expressive, as well as free and improvisatory, which could allow for further depth of emotional expression. They explore sadness and lamentation, make use of modal melodies and improvised embellishments, such as *glissandi* and *appogiaturi*. A clear example of an *Aman* can be heard online, via Costacap (2009).³⁸⁵ A re-contextualised use of an *Aman* within a pop-rock context can be heard in Diamanda Galás's emotive 1994 performance of 'Skóto seme' ('Kill Me') (see **Case Studies**).³⁸⁶

Many of these stylistic elements are also found in Hungarian music collected by Béla Bartók and Zoltán Kodály and their colleagues throughout the central European region. Indeed, Bartók, in collecting folk melodies in the field, initially "notated only the core melodic line", omitting embellishment, thinking of "the subtleties of ornaments and rhythm [as] incidental additions of the singer".³⁸⁷ As he matured in his exploration, he realised the embellishments were essential to the music.³⁸⁸ Likewise, improvised embellishment became essential to the composition of *ELEGEIA*. To set

³⁸¹ Bates, Eliot. 2008. "Introduction to greek rebetika and smyrnaiikan music." [Online] <http://www.musiq.com/rebetika/index.php>, viewed 11 Dec 2014.

³⁸² Holst-Warhaft (2003), p. 173.

³⁸³ Bates (2008), p. 4, <http://www.musiq.com/rebetika/page4.php>.

³⁸⁴ Ibid.

³⁸⁵ From (01:56): Costacap (Apr 10, 2009) Αμανές Θεοδώρα - Ευγένιος [Online] <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dB7JThtKwXE>, viewed 12 Feb 2012.

³⁸⁶ Sansfutur (2008). *Diamanda Galás & John Paul Jones - Skóto seme (live 1994) on The Jon Stewart Show*, MTV. [Online] <https://youtu.be/f0AljnQ8t30>, last accessed 17 May 2015.

³⁸⁷ Frigyesi (1998), p. 238.

³⁸⁸ Ibid.

the scene for the types of embellishments I was exploring, I shared and discussed Hungarian folk pieces sung with extensive embellishment / 'folk embroidery' by Hungarian folk singers Beáta Palya³⁸⁹ and Beatrix Tárnoki,³⁹⁰ which I felt were 'definitive' examples of the style I was keen to include. The musical inspiration of *Amannes* and Hungarian folk music appear in *ELEGEIA* most prominently in the folk song sections in Section II (see **Appendix 14. 12.14.9.** for final score, pp. 8-10).

In response to the introduction of the mourning female voice, Nikos suggested another Greek resource in addition to *Amannes*. We listened to *Miroloi*³⁹¹ (Greek death vigil singing) as another possible source for emotional material exploring extended vocal techniques. This was also particularly interesting because women are common *Miroloi* singers, singing laments that make use of unusual vocal techniques to mourn the dead during all-night vigils.³⁹² The vocal quality in traditional *Miroloi* feels very raw and could not be called 'singing' *per se*; ululation,³⁹³ keening, and extremely large, sudden leaps in range and vocal quality abound. *Miroloi* vocalisation, especially in ALLIOTHI (2009), includes the following three elements: half-spoken, half-wailed speech in the chest range - as the text was in Greek, and the actual content of the material was less important to me than the vocal quality of crying/wailing with speech-like sound, I recorded gibberish, with varied pitching within each gibberish phrase. Ululation³⁹⁴ (tremolo) at high registers, breaking up the wailed speech, is what I called 'miroloi' in the score,³⁹⁵ represented by the wavy single line rising in pitch; two voices in clashing intervals in this case, more or less consistently a major 9th. This brought in the element of bitonality, which I introduced in the form of bitonal singing, also inspired by Tuvan / Mongolian bitonal singing, as in *Genghis*

³⁸⁹ Palya, Bea. (2009) *Egyszálének (OneBitofSong)* [CD] Sony Music, János Mazura. [Can be heard at: Elek, Judit (2009) Beata Palya. 'Úgy elmegyek rózsám valamerre' [Online] <http://youtu.be/B6QDRd2XCQY>, viewed 14 Feb 2012.]

³⁹⁰ Folk Műhely Alkotóközösség (Folk Workshop Hungary) (1996) *Újélő népzene (Living Village Music)* [CD] Pál Havasréti. [Can be heard at: Hungarianfolk1732 (2011) *Hungarian Folk 1 -- track 9 of 13* - Beatrix Tárnoki. 'Én kimenék küs kertembe' [Online] <http://youtu.be/SmRUBdsYOM8>, viewed 14 Feb. 2012.

³⁹¹ See Glossary.

³⁹² As in ALLIOTHI (2009).

³⁹³ Wishart (1996), p. 274 and Glassett-Murdoch (2011), p. 70. See Glossary.

³⁹⁴ Wishart (1996) *On Sonic Art*, p.274.

³⁹⁵ See **Appendix 14. 12.14.9.** for *miroloi* in the score, p. 1 in the key, and in context, p. 5 at (3:22-3:31).

Blues. For an example of *Miroloi* singing in a real death vigil, see Aldimitris (2009),³⁹⁶ while a performance version ALLIOHTHI (2009)³⁹⁷ shows very clearly the extended vocalisations in *Miroloi*. In fact, composer Nikos Stavropoulos used excerpts from this video³⁹⁸ in the first mock-up³⁹⁹ of vocal ideas, many of which I later explored vocally in creating *ELEGEIA*.

8.3. Method of Collaboration, The Evolving Score as Collaborative Tool

The highly collaborative process for creation of *ELEGEIA* (for Anna) will be discussed, highlighting the co-compositional process, from the initial sharing back and forth of media as inspiration and reference points to the recording process, the development of the score and performance. The notation of the score will be discussed as a compositional and collaborative tool, firstly as a way for understanding and familiarising myself with my colleague's intentions in his electroacoustic treatment of my initial improvisations in recording, which became the tape element (fixed medium), and secondly as a compositional tool for creating the new live vocal sections. It also served as a reference point for further collaborative discussion and decision-making to further the compositional process.

The initial discussions and exchange of media as sources of context and sound material took place between 20 October 2011 and 22 March 2012. Throughout our discussions, Nikos Stavropoulos and I shared media electronically via Dropbox, email and Skype. This was particularly important in the creation stage, where we were settling on material for inspiration, which included *Miroloi*, defined by Stavropoulos as “a kind of melody carried on the clarinet or voice...in real life half [-sung,] half spoken over the grave or coffin, often uncontrolled”. He shared several media sources as examples, in search of the most dramatic, where “screaming and crying become one”.⁴⁰⁰ Other resources I shared included harmonics singing, such

³⁹⁶ Aldimitris (2009) Μανιάτικο μοιρολόι. [Online]

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TJxqC4fiqM&feature=related>, viewed 31 Jan 2012.

³⁹⁷ ALLIOHTHI (2009) ΜΟΙΡΟΛΟΙ ΣΤΟ ΠΟΛΥΦΩΝΙΚΟ ΚΑΡΑΒΑΝΙ / ΦΩΤΑΨΙΕΣ ΤΗΣ ΑΛΛΗΣ ΟΧΘΗΣ. [Online] <http://youtu.be/y3EYZtfopzg>, viewed 31 Jan 2012 and 3 Sept 2013.

³⁹⁸ Ibid.

³⁹⁹ *Anikó Test 1*, see **Appendix 14. 12.14.2.**

⁴⁰⁰ Stavropoulos, email 20 Oct 2011.

as vocalist Fatima Miranda,⁴⁰¹ similar to the material I had heard from Tuvan traditional singing,⁴⁰² and examples of Hungarian folk singing including improvised embellishment.

In response to my extended vocal sounds in January 2012, Stavropoulos sent a mock-up of a possible structure and sound palette on 22 Feb 2012, which he entitled *Anikó Test 1* (**Appendix 1. Audio 5.**). This included some of the *Extended Vocals* elements, as well as audio from *Miroloi* media;⁴⁰³ he was most interested in sounds between singing and *glissandi*.⁴⁰⁴ This structured piece, including material sourced from actual *Miroloi* singing from the various media sources we had explored, gave me a chance to explore through imitation the vocal qualities of the *Miroloi* singers, including the forced, crying, high larynx sound in “Mona kopidi(n)...”, female falsetto singing in “Posman deaxo?” and the other, stylistically-similar phrases⁴⁰⁵ at the end. On 28 February 2012, I created the mock-up score of *Anikó Test 1*, using graphic and traditional notation (**Appendix 14. 12.14.2.**). This style of mixed notation was appealing in that the graphics allowed for flexibility in representing extended sounds, coupled with the exactness of traditional notation. Having a fixed visual representation of the sounds allowed me to record my interpretation of the composer’s mock-up, *Anikó Test 2*, to put it into my own voice in March 2012 (**Appendix 1. Audio 6.**). The composer suggested workshopping in a recording session to further develop the sound world we were exploring.

29 March 2012: First Collaborative Recording, Leeds

Previous to recording, Nikos and I discussed a variety of sounds to try out during the session (**Appendix 14. 12.14.3.**). Sources included *Amannes* (*Och, Aman!* – “Ah! Mercy!”) and Hungarian translations of these exclamations (*Ajjaj/Ujjuj, Jaj nekem!* – “Woe is me! Alas!”), *Miroloi*⁴⁰⁶ vocalisation inspired by media, improvised Hungarian-style lamentation singing, as well as everyday sounds and personal exploration of my

⁴⁰¹ Avlis (2008).

⁴⁰² Ondar, Kongar-ol and Paul Pena (2000) *Genghis Blues* [CD], e.g. track 6, ‘Ondarnyng Ayany (Ondar’s Medley)’

⁴⁰³ ALLIOHTHI (2009).

⁴⁰⁴ Stavropoulos email 17 Feb 2012.

⁴⁰⁵ These phrases are gibberish approximations of what I heard of the cut up Greek words Stavropoulos selected from the above media source. See the mock-up score **Appendix 14. 12.14.2.**

⁴⁰⁶ See Glossary.

own voice based on the themes of loss, desperation, helplessness, and anger; a variety of extended vocal sounds over a wide pitch range and expressive range were thus recorded. Positions of larynx/epiglottis (tilted cry/twang⁴⁰⁷), tongue, and lips were considered. Sounds included: vocal fry⁴⁰⁸ with various lip (vowel) and tongue shapes (open and tongue-to-palate, symbolised in IPA⁴⁰⁹ by: ʔ), sirens/*glissandi*, what I called *Mirolol*-like falsetto sounds or ululation, bitonal harmonics, gibberish/'tongues'/low mumbling, (coming out of language into grief), percussive gibberish (kt-kt-kazit-kt-kt), sucking teeth, shaking teeth, howling, folk-like singing, gasps (using soft palate to varying degrees), ugh!/retch, guttural zombie moaning, as well as 'reverse gulps'.⁴¹⁰ Stavropoulos coached and asked for sound adaptations based on his personal interest and taste.

According to sources, Berio, when working with Cathy Berberian to record the sounds he wanted for *Visage*, went about this in a similar way. Indeed, he apparently did not provide a text, but "asked Berberian to improvise a series of monologues... based on a repertoire of vocal gestures and phonetic material suggested by the Italian language", so, much of the improvisation came from Berberian, herself.⁴¹¹ However, in our case, we both were using a shared background of agreed sound sources and ideas, as well as filtering material based on our personal interests and talents. Further, I was not just an oscillator⁴¹² in that I would go on to make further structural compositional choices, as well as improvisations. In this way, our process differs from the Berio-Berberian process.

Singing for an extended period, I felt vocally exhausted by the end of the recording session (as Berberian had been after recording several forms of laughter for

⁴⁰⁷ Thus named by Jo Estill, referenced by Kayes 2004.

⁴⁰⁸ See Glossary.

⁴⁰⁹ International Phonetic Alphabet, used by singers and linguists for pronunciation guidance: Wall, (1989).

⁴¹⁰ See Glossary for definitions of these terms. See also **Appendix 14. 12.14.9.** for *ELEGEIA* key and score.

⁴¹¹ Halfyard 2004, p. 5. "Berio did not provide a text [for *Visage*]: the strings of phonemes, the gradual build up into language – these are all [Berberian's] improvisations in response to Berio's general directions; and his piece is a response in turn to her improvisation... Berberian, in her work in the studio, has usually been relegated to the position of an oscillator, a machine that is programmed in the correct way to produce the required sounds, but this is a drastic oversimplification of her role in the creation of these works in particular where her voice and her imagination, her creativity in improvisations, are an essential part of the compositional process."

⁴¹² Osmond-Smith in Meehan 2011, p. 56.

Visage)⁴¹³ but had reached a sort of trance state, during which I came up with the Hungarian folk song section, based on a Greek *Aman* source⁴¹⁴ that featured a bird theme – the loved one represented by the bird. In the online recording, a woman sings a melody (in Ab) over a pedal of A and pedal C. She sings with a nasal, crying (tilted larynx) sound typical of folk singing:

Pou pas, peristeráki mou? 332 – 332 – 1 – 1 – 1⁴¹⁵
Na ftiáxeis tin folia sou? 332 – 332 – 1 – 1 – 1
Kemáranes ta híli mou 234321 – 1 – 1
Kekápses tin kardiá mou. 2 – 2 – 3-4 – 1 – 1 – 1

Where are you going, my little pigeon?
To build your nest?
You wilted my lips.
You burned my heart.

I improvised a Hungarian folk-like lament melody and text:

Miért repültél el tőlem, kismadárkám?
Gyere haza, kismadárkám!

(Why have you flown away, my little bird?
Come back home to me, my little bird!)

The composer seemed very affected by the sounds I produced in this trance-like state, especially as many were connected to Greek language. Whilst I knew what I was singing/uttering from a translation, it must have impacted him more viscerally, based on his reaction. I mused that this trancelike state, if possible to recreate, could be helpful in live performance in creating an affective experience for the audience, which I will discuss in the female protagonist section. The use of few words among the liminal, extended vocal sounds, such as those used in Berio's *Visage*, represent the conscious self coming out of a trance-like, purely emotional state into which I intended to bring the audience. This was my impression of the initial *Miroloi*

⁴¹³ Osmond-Smith in Meehan 2011, p. 56. "Osmond-Smith described 'a series of 2-3 hour recording sessions,' with one of the sessions 'devoted to exploring 'all sorts of laughter.' Berberian told him that as a result, her diaphragm was 'bruised for two days.'"

⁴¹⁴ This reference is now lost/no longer online.

⁴¹⁵ The numbers here represent scale degrees as a mnemonic for remembering the tune.

sources,⁴¹⁶ that the singer could be completely immersed in the emotion (i.e. trance), perhaps a symptom of purely in-the-moment mourning.

Upon evaluation of the sound world we had created, I wondered if the production of the extended sounds and the Hungarian text I had improvised, inspired by the Greek lament, would be effective / affective enough, or would using some English words to create a more visceral impact? Would adding more languages make it more universal, or be more cumbersome and unnecessary? In the end, I found this complete immersion in emotion and presentation of 'human', rather than lingual, material - like *Visage* - fulfilled my intention of presenting a fully-human female protagonist, making the piece more accessible and effective in taking the audience on an affective journey. I will discuss this in more depth in the female protagonist section.

At the end of April 2012, I contacted the composer to request any sketches he had been working on, hoping to show a work-in-progress piece at the Salford Sonic Fusion Festival, where I was to perform original piece *Vocalise/Vocal Wheeze* (**Appendix 3.**), which was an exploration in graphic notation and extended vocal sounds. Nikos Stavropoulos created a three-scene electroacoustic Tape section, which he Dropboxed to me on 19 May 2012. The recorded sounds, *Rough Scenes* (1, 2 and 3), can be heard in **Appendix 1. Audio 7., 8., 9.**

Stavropoulos felt Scene 1 was complete, with both tape and live voice accounted for, without processing. He suggested changes for the final version, including seamless alignment of the tape and voice parts at the start (using glottal fry⁴¹⁷ at the opening), as well as added length and more *tempo* variety in the gibberish ('muttering') sections. Scene 2 he felt 'very rough', with only the tape section complete, no voice; he suggested improvisational gibberish/muttering to create the vocal line here: "...Although muttering is the main material for this section, it will be articulated with pitched, electronic and percussive sounds and include *accelerandos* and *ritenutos*".⁴¹⁸ Scene 3's simple idea was still in development.

⁴¹⁶ Especially Aldimitris (2009).

⁴¹⁷ Vocal fry. See Glossary.

⁴¹⁸ Stavropoulos (2012) email.

My notes in June 2012 included an initial memory aid in lieu of the score (which did not yet exist) with commentary on performance considerations and ideas, including dance/music theatre elements. I used my own names for my March recorded sounds and the composer's digital processing in the written breakdown (**Appendix 14. 12.14.4**), some of which would appear in iterations of the score. I discussed compromising on some recorded vocal sounds due to their long-term possible negative effects on my voice, such as the high screaming ('seagulls').⁴¹⁹ Nikos Stavropoulos suggested some *tempo* variation from the *Rough Scenes*, especially in the live vocal line, and we had ideas for a Section IV with recapped ideas from Section I to lengthen the piece and allow for dance movement. Further ideas for performance included video background and possible collaborators for this. Visual imagery discussed included maggots and snakes through skulls or images from graphic novel *100 Months*, which could also be used for body positioning/movement inspiration. (These theatrical settings were eventually abandoned in favour of simplicity and lack of distraction from the music and female protagonist.)

August – September 2012: Initial Score Development

I completed a draft Score 1 in August - September 2012, using graphic notation with durations and timed hit points (**Appendix 14. 12.14.5**). Some vocal elements were represented using the IPA,⁴²⁰ as in *Vocalise/Vocal Wheeze* (2008/2012), such as tongue-to-palate: ʟ ; the voiced *sh* sound as in treasure (IPA: ʒ); and glottal stop (IPA: ʔ).⁴²¹ I also used vowels used in Hungarian, such as Á, É, to indicate acuteness (brightness or frontal location in the mouth) and Ó, which also indicates long length.

Other sounds were represented by original graphic notation, such as:

sob: x

teeth: * |+++| * a drawing of teeth with gasp marks for in-breath

gasp: *

⁴¹⁹ See Glossary.

⁴²⁰ Wall (1989). (International Phonetic Alphabet, commonly used in Classical training in learning foreign pronunciation)

⁴²¹ Ibid.

Volume was indicated by the size of the graphic, for example, a loud gasp was represented by a large asterisk: *= loud gasp⁴²²

As the score was to be for personal use, no key was created initially, but was created 29 Oct 2013 (**Appendix 14. 12.14.8**). The first score featured the tape section scored at the top, with the vocal line at the bottom. Trevor Wishart's graphic notation of three-part vocal piece *Anticredos* also has three layers of graphics to represent the vocal lines.⁴²³ The up and down wiggly line shown with various ranges of thickness indicate pitch and volume, similar to *ELEGEIA* score elements that I created from my synaesthetic approach. (Wishart's score also makes use of the International Phonetic Alphabet for phonemic sounds.) The job of transcription scoring was extremely time-consuming and felt like an inexact science. (Transcription was easier once the composer had sent each part in separate audio files in June 2012.) However, the score gave both composers a clearer reference point for performance and compositional changes.

20 February 2013 – March 2013: *Development and structuring of the piece and the score*

The collaborative process for the Folk Female piece began anew in earnest in February of 2013, with an opportunity for a full premiere performance in Corfu, Greece in June 2013. Several audio exchanges took place between Stavropoulos and me February-March 2013 in preparation for further recording on 13 March. A new section was added, such as the 'bubbling' section at stanza 4 (01:25-02:16), which meant additions to the existing draft score, and the folk-song sections were notated (**Appendix 14. 12.14.6**). On 8 Mar 2013, Nikos Stavropoulos sent a newer version via Dropbox, now renamed *ELEGEIA* (formerly *Folk Female*). The name means Elegy, which reflects the emotional content and inspirations of the piece, such as the *Mirolói* and other grieving / lamentation singing. I then created a draft score for the new 4a part (c. 01:40-02:12) in Section I, as well as for the Tape part in Section II (c. 03:46-09:20) with clear pitches, cues and timing, leaving the vocal section blank for vocal exploration during the studio recording planned for 13 Mar 2013.

⁴²² See Glossary and the score's key in **Appendix 14. 12.14.9** for further detail.

⁴²³ Wishart (1997), p. 282.

Stavropoulos also made a few notes for expressive changes in the new score, such as at 02:20, where he wanted the moaning gibberish/tongues in a higher register, with more variation.

During our preparatory discussions about *ELEGEIA*, Nikos suggested a change in Section II during the drone below the Hungarian folk song-like melody (“Miért repültél el, kismadárkám?”). The vocal line could harmonise with the drone (on Ab) using thirds (major and minor) and perfect fifths. I countered, insisting minor and major seconds and augmented and perfect fourths are more dissonant and define more clearly the emotion of the material. More consonant intervals could be added later, leading towards a resolution towards the ending. I became aware at this time of the difference in this compositional process from collaborations with other composers. Here, my direct creative, compositional and developmental input featured much more in the creative process than other works I had collaborated on / performed. While many compositional and structural decisions are being made by Stavropoulos, who created the electroacoustic Tape sections, it became clear that this was a co-compositional endeavour.

Stavropoulos also suggested that at 03:47-05:30 I could explore ‘throaty sounds’, such as glottal fry and retching. Other elements could be ‘pre-echoes’ of the folksong with crying and harmonisation *crescendo*-ing into the folksong. I was to record or explore sounds using a microphone and headphones to get an isolated effect to I come up with two to three suggestions for drone sections, such as 1) cry 2) harmonies and 3) articulation of various cues. Upon my request on 12 March 2013, to help prepare for the recording, Stavropoulos Dropboxed a tape-only recording with which I could practice.

13 March 2014: Second Collaborative Recording, Leeds

At Leeds Metropolitan University, we discussed ideas for Section II. For the opening half, we discussed stable pitches (A natural and Bb) to clash with the Drone on Ab. Stavropoulos suggested that these pitches should come out of noisy glottal attacks, to appear as reactions to sound events in the Tape section. He also suggested adding very slow *glissandi* around the pitch, changing pitch and vowel / noise at the

same rate. *Glissandi* could be broken up with crying reacting to elements in the tape. (See Rehearsal notes, **Appendix 14. 12.14.7.**)

14 June 2013 - 8 August 2013: *Final recording sessions, audio, rehearsal backing took place, along with completion of piece in Leeds.*

On 21 June 2013, I received from Nikos Stavropoulos the final, tape-only version in preparation for the world premiere (**Appendix 1. Audio 10.**). I began draft 3 of the *ELEGEIA* score for the 26 June 2013 World Premiere in Corfu (Listening Cities), and continued using some older sections of the score (**Appendix 14. 12.14.8.**) for this performance. There was an intention to create a more accessible score for publishing. However, the piece is so personal and individual, it was debatable as to whether there would be a need for this, as I, the singer-composer, intended to continue singing the piece in future performances and would, most likely, be the sole performer of *ELEGEIA*. Based on the new recording of 14 June 2013, Stavropoulos completed the final mixed recording of *ELEGEIA* on 8 August 2013, which was of a good standard, but did not give the full effect given by the spatially-diffused, live performance featuring a live vocalist.

29 October 2013 – 30 June 2014: *Further performances, Score Development*

I developed the written score further and requested further rehearsals with Stavropoulos for UK performances, which included the 13 March 2014 UK premiere, International Festival for Artistic Innovation, Leeds College of Music, The Venue; 2014 Scarborough performance (University of Hull); and a 3 April 2014 Performance at Salford Sonic Fusion Festival 2014 with Manchester Theatre in Sound (MANTIS), headed by David Berezan of the University of Manchester, using the July-March Corfu score. The final, definitive score submitted to the ICMC 2014 for performance in September 2014 featured spectrographs of the Tape section, with timed hit points, upon Stavropoulos' suggestion. While the final score is aesthetically beautiful and features clearer direction in the vocal line, with the removal of further graphic representation of the Tape part, we lose some textural information which was essential to learning the aural cues for live reaction to the Tape part. To counter this, I marked in relevant Tape hit points that inform the vocal performance. (See

Appendix 14. 12.14.9.). However, I would recommend that performer-composers working in a similar way continue to use graphic notation.

In conclusion, the score - auditory and visual - developed between co-composers, and the graphic and traditionally notated score served as a reference point for discussion of expressive elements, compositional addenda and structuring. In terms of performance, the score for *ELEGEIA* is a mnemonic and guide for the performer with clear hit points for the vocal performer to react to or match with the set Tape section. In evaluation of performances (such as the ICMC performance, **Appendix 1. Video 7.**), the use of a paper score is distracting from the emotive element of the performance. A solution for future performances is to have a PDF of the score on a digital device to remove the need for physical page turns.

8.4. Vocal Techniques and Considerations

A range of extended techniques were used, initially explored in relation to several stimuli, including John Hicklenton's graphic novel *100 Months*, which seemed to distill in textual and visual form, an extreme sense of grief, anger, loss and finally, redemption for character Mara; the Greek death vigil singing *miroloi* the composer and I listened to online, and folk music of both Hungary and Greece. Final sounds chosen by the composer from my improvisations included the granular glottal fry (exhaled with various vowel shapes, tongue and laryngeal positions - high/low; inhaled with open nasal port with low to high, question intonation); drones from harmonics singing; extreme high vocals ('seagulls'), gibberish - especially throughout Section I (see **Appendix 14. 12.14.9.** for score), and finally Hungarian folk song fused with the *Aman* and *Miroloi* styles of singing.⁴²⁴

Where composer Stavropoulos wanted a repeat of an extreme high screech in the whistle register,⁴²⁵ I was concerned about permanent vocal damage, being unable to recreate the sound that had come out in the recording session. After *Green Angel*, where I experienced a detrimental vocal effect (vocal damage) that lasted three weeks, I was keen to set boundaries for maintenance of vocal health. In

⁴²⁴ See Glossary for clarification of terms.

⁴²⁵ See Glossary.

performance, I used a modified version of the screech, which was to vocalise at the highest range of whistle register⁴²⁶ with which I felt comfortable on each day of performance, which varied.⁴²⁷

8.5. The Female Protagonist Voiced and Embodied

My intention with bringing a high level of personal emotional involvement into a live Vocal and Electroacoustic Tape piece was to evoke an emotional response in the audience, and perhaps even bring them into an altered state of emotional experience. This is part of the creation of the fully-human female protagonist. Bosma's (1996) and Halfyard's (2006) question of attribution in electroacoustic works will be discussed herein, as well.

Anhalt quotes Berberian as calling live solo vocal piece *Sequenza III* (1966), which Berio wrote for her, "an x-ray of a woman's life".⁴²⁸ *ELEGEIA*, too, can be viewed as an x-ray of a time of moment in this woman's life. It is timeless, too, as it deals with humanity universally, albeit with the filter of the female voice, body, image and all those represent: "The final result [of listening to Berio's *Sequenza III*]... for both performer and listener is catharsis. Emotional tensions are relieved by having been expressed through an aesthetic experience and sublimated by artistic portrayal, thus universalization [sic]".⁴²⁹ Similarly, in listening to Berberian's use of human sounds in Berio's *Visage*, which is exclusively made of Berberian's voice with very little treatment aside from cutting together (bringing up Bosma's and Halfyard's discussion of attribution in electroacoustic music, again) I was struck by the range of vocalised human emotions within the piece.

Personally, I was interested in creating an expression of pure, truthful emotion, which I consider is an essential part of my embodiment of the female protagonist on stage, similar to other female performer-composers, such as Diamanda Galás, whose

⁴²⁶ See Glossary.

⁴²⁷ No two performances of *ELEGEIA* have been exactly the same. Indeed, there is enough space for interpretation built into the score to allow for this. The intention of the piece, which is to give the audience a cathartic, affective experience, is the main focus, rather than achieving virtuosic heights in the extended vocal techniques used.

⁴²⁸ Anhalt (1984), p. 40.

⁴²⁹ Ibid.

embodiment of rage in 'Skóto seme' (Kill Me) is a direct response to a personal experience of grief. Indeed, this piece responds to Jann Pasler's (1992) call for more musical works from the "private and personal domain",⁴³⁰ in her response to Susan McClary's *Feminine Endings* (1991/1996). The female voice is female voice, rather than as a channel for a male composer's conception of the female - I am telling my story, rather than interpreting an outside composer's story. Indeed, my composer collaborator Nikos Stavropoulos was interpreting *my* emotive 'story' through his electroacoustic treatment and structuring for the tape section, which I created through the hybridisation of emotionally-charged extended techniques and lamentation singing from Greek and Hungarian contexts.

It was the intention of *ELEGEIA*, therefore, to take the audience on an affective journey by leading them through a trancelike state I went through in my initial recording. Plato, when discussing trance, uses the term *mania* ("madness"), according to Rouget (1980). (This term *maniatiko* also describes many of the *miroloi* media - see Bibliography). In *Phaedrus*, one of the types of mania Plato describes is: "*epipnoia*, an 'inspiration'." Rouget continues, saying:

The effect of *epipnoia* is to put the subject "out of his senses" (*ekphrón*). Thus Plato says of the poet that he is "never able to compose until he has become 'engodded' [*entheos*], and is beside himself [*ekphrón*] and reason is no longer in him..."⁴³¹

This release into trance-like creative state seemed essential for creating the folk-song section, Section II of the piece. It was as if I were channelling my deeply-rooted emotions of grief and loss, acting like Plato's poet, and I worked to recreate this fully-human, fully present channelling in performance, while also being aware of performance elements. The extensive use of drones in the electroacoustic treatment helped facilitate this return to trance, which is evocative of the 'true' emotive experience I was 'channelling' during the March recording session, making the intention truly collaborative between co-composers. The visual embodiment of the female protagonist through costume and makeup - in this case a heightened version of myself as Mourning Woman, also played a part in this creation.

⁴³⁰ Pasler (1992), p. 204, p. 4 online.

⁴³¹ Rouget (1980), p. 191.

Carter and Steiner (2004) define 'male gaze' in their glossary as "A psychoanalytic notion popularized in the 1970s by US film scholar Laura Mulvey who argued that mainstream films are constructed to allow men to identify with the male protagonist, and to see through his eyes. Female audiences also view films through this male gaze, thus eroticizing and objectifying female characters in a similar fashion to male audiences".⁴³² This is particularly relevant in a male-dominated genre such as electroacoustic music, which I consider to be very cerebral and often lacking emotion or humanity; the sounds are 'disembodied' and modified so as to remove their connection with the source sounds to focus the listener on the new, pure sound created. In *ELEGEIA*, by contrast, my presence as live performer focuses the audience's gaze on the embodied female mourner. This is because, with eyes closed, a listener struggles to distinguish what is tape and what is voice, which was an intended outcome of the sound treatment in performance (e.g. use of reverb and spatial diffusion of both live and tape elements). Only by watching my performance and reading my facial expressions and body language can an audience member tell which is the live vocal line and which is the electroacoustic treatment of the same voice, similar to the first performances of Babbitt's *Philomel*, where Bethany Beardslee's voice appears on the tape and live.⁴³³ In focusing the audience's gaze on me, I confront the audience with the emotionality that a female mourner represents, in all her vulnerable and human glory.

Despite initial thoughts to use gaunt or skeletal makeup effects, I decided to use a fresh, natural-looking makeup to show that I am healthy, but this mourning and loss can happen to anyone, even the young and healthy. To heighten the 'feminine' and youthful innocence of my appearance, I used false eyelashes for larger eyes and full makeup with blushed cheeks and lips. Fully aware of the gaze of my audience, I am 'performing' femininity to elicit a reaction:

Awareness of being watched and of seeing oneself as an object has the potential to shape how women move through and engage with the physical environment and reinforce an objectified consciousness.⁴³⁴

⁴³² Carter and Steiner (2004), p. 349.

⁴³³ Elliott (2006) p. 296.

⁴³⁴ Howson (2005), p.79, referencing Young (1990).

While I am not moving through the environment, reinforcing my objectification with the way that I move, as Young discusses,⁴³⁵ I am taking the objectifying view of my audience and consciously drawing their attention to my facial expression and mouth movement. I am also actively limiting their view of the rest of my body through the costume choice of black clothing.

In keeping with the colour of mourning, as shown in the *miroloi* media,⁴³⁶ I chose all black attire, with a long skirt for a 'traditional', folk-influenced female look. (I would never think of performing *ELEGEIA* in trousers. The female embodiment of the performer is essential in terms of its message and function, of bringing audience members through an emotion experience to catharsis, as well as culturally accurate; indeed, *miroloi* singing at death vigils is a traditionally female role.).⁴³⁷ In the most recent performance (2014) at the International Computer Music Conference (ICMC) in Athens, Greece, I also wore a black headscarf, which retained the performative element in that it subtly sparkled, but it looked similar to what the *Miroloi* singers wear in the media explored⁴³⁸ (which is also semi-stylised and performative.). The sparkling headscarf, with long-sleeved and long-skirted attire, served to focus attention to my face and its expressions. Several performances of *ELEGEIA* appear in **Appendix 1.** to show the range of improvisation within each performance; however, because the costume and performance were most effective (and affective) in the Athens performance, I would call this the definitive performance to date (**Appendix 1. Video 7.**). In creating a vulnerable, very human female mourner on stage, whose femininity is heightened with false eyelashes, makeup and feminine clothing, I attempt to humanise the electroacoustic music, which is already made up of human sounds.

ELEGEIA builds upon the personal, emotive nature of works by vocalist-composers Meredith Monk, Joan La Barbara, Cathy Berberian,⁴³⁹ and Diamanda Galás hybridising and re-contextualising a range of extended vocal techniques and

⁴³⁵ Young (2005/1980), pp. 27-45.

⁴³⁶ ALLIOTHI (2009).

⁴³⁷ Markeas (no date). The composer uses as inspiration for his piece *miroloi*, which he notes is a funereal lamentation performed by female mourners ("les pleureuses").

⁴³⁸ Ibid.

⁴³⁹ Halfyard considers Berberian's contribution to Berio's works as having co-compositional merit.

culturally-coded vocal qualities, such as Hungarian folk lamentation and Greek *miroloi* vocalisation. I used costume to portray a heightened embodiment of the female protagonist and to focus the gaze of the audience to create *an auditory and visual distillation of grief* to take the audience on an emotional auditory and visual journey, telling a story, rather than simply regurgitating pure sound in the electroacoustic tradition. In choosing and developing the sound-world through extended vocal techniques, creating the original source sounds, the written score, co-composing the final vocal line, and devising and performing the embodiment of the female Mourner, I go above and beyond what Bosma (1996) calls co-creation – performer as the final co-creator/co-author of a librettist's and composer's character.

On the subject of attribution, notable here is the relevance of Bosma's (1996) discussion of the co-creation of electroacoustic works by female performers, 'The Death of the Singer: Authorship and Female Voices in Electronic Music':

Issues of authorship do not only relate to "who did what", but also to who is represented as an author, and in which way. It can be very useful to read credits not as a neutral rendering of the various contributions of the musicians, but as a text that offers us for example a male composer or a female singer as the main figure, or presents a composition as a co-production. Who is in the credits represented, in which way, and how does that relate to the music?

This very topic came up in the way the piece was attributed consistently in performances. At a *majority* of the performances, including the world premiere in Corfu, Greece, the UK premiere in Leeds, and the definitive performance at the ICMC in Athens, Greece, co-composer Stavropoulos had to prompt organisers to include my name as co-composer, as it had been omitted in the programmes. This happened verbally in the Leeds programme and in all the ICMC Athens literature,⁴⁴⁰ as well as in the concert. In other words, for these concerts, nowhere in written form was my essential role acknowledged. The impression given was that my contribution as co-composer, co-creator was an afterthought. Bosma's assertion would make this problematic, even if my co-creation had 'only' been through performance. The fact that this is still a question nearly twenty years after Bosma's paper, and ten years

⁴⁴⁰ ICMC, Athens (2014), Tuesday 16/9/2014 concert, 20:30-22:00. It appears the online programme has been changed, following Stavropoulos' prompting. I am still learning to speak up for myself in situations like this, and hopefully my work will prompt other female collaborators to stand up for their contribution in collaborative projects.

after Halfyard's, shows the need for female vocalists like myself to speak up in performance and academic situations in the electroacoustic community, acting as female protagonists in life, as well.

8.6. Output and Conclusion

The evolution of the score and collaborative creation of our piece can be summed up in the evolution of its title. Its initial incarnation as *The Folk Female* indicated its connection to the folk music references of Greece and Hungary to reflect each composer's respective background. Its new title *ELEGEIA*⁴⁴¹ showed its new iteration as a vehicle for emotive grief sounds, greatly influenced by Greek mourning, indicated by its title meaning 'Elegy' in Greek. It is also an aesthetically pleasing title with its many vowels that indicate a sung quality. Finally, it became *ELEGEIA* (for Anna), a collaborative title with multilayered meaning. The addendum of (for Anna) refers to the dedication of the piece by Nikos Stavropoulos to his cousin, of whose untimely death he learnt on the final day of recording in July 2013. While this is the overt dedication, for me it has an underlying meaning, which is a reference to a personal mourning that *ELEGEIA* represented (Anikó is a Hungarian diminutive of Anna). The dedication (for Anna) is in a liminal capacity, because technically, it is not part of the title. However, this dedication has 'organically grown' to become connected to the title. The fact the piece is an elegy with true emotional relevance for both composers gives it a further depth of meaning for us and for the audience when they read the programme notes, and reflects the 'personal and intimate domain' Pasler (1992) yearns for in new works. Finally, the piece is a distillation of sounds of grief that will be familiar to the audience of human beings, who are taken on an affective journey through the three-dimensional diffusion of emotional sounds being performed by a fully-human female protagonist. Verbal feedback for *ELEGEIA* at performances has been consistently positive.

⁴⁴¹ Pronounced EL-eh-GHEE-ah.

Chapter Nine: *to the wider ocean*: for voice, piano trio and video

9.1. Overview

to the wider ocean (2014) is a 30-minute piece for string trio and soprano by Australian composer/digital artist Christine McCombe that I commissioned in 2013. Collaborative elements included video footage and photographs for each section of the piece, as well as my vocal performances of Hungarian folk lullabies, chosen themes and performance elements and choices. Inspiration included poetry by Australian poet Alison Croggon, whose sea- and ocean-image-imbued texts became the perfect starting point in the exploration of Mother-daughter/mother-child relationships, which also consider themes of memory and nurturing. Other underlying themes of the work – distance and connection, absence and presence⁴⁴² – were explored during the workshop performance in Salford, 2014. McCombe's video images "are equally diverse, but the recurring theme of the sea binds the work together as a connecting thread and metaphor".⁴⁴³ The piece and its creative process are in response to the need for works that come from the female perspective, as described by Pasler (1992) in response to McClary's (1991) feminist critique of the stereotyped portrayal of women in operatic and musical works, *Feminine Endings*. Our use of emotive and personal themes build upon the body of work created by other female composer-performers, such as Diamanda Galás and Meredith Monk.

9.2. Research Context

9.2.1. The Collaborative Process from a Distance

Composer / digital artist Christine McCombe (Australia) and vocalist/performer Anikó Toth (UK)

Our collaborative enquiry began in earnest from our first Skype™ conversation on 1 August 2013, after several months of email exchanges, where we discussed a variety of sources and topics regarding the theme stimulus I had chosen for a brand new collaborative musical work: 'Mother', in line my personal quest for understanding my inner and outer worlds, including motherhood (which I have not yet experienced) and

⁴⁴² McCombe, C (2014) 'Work Across Oceans: Online collaboration in *to the wider ocean*' *Intetain* 2014.

⁴⁴³ McCombe (2014) programme notes.

my relationship to my own mother. McCombe was also personally interested in the theme, and we both looked upon it as fertile fodder for the creation of a new piece rooted in intimacy and emotional relationships. This is in direct response to Pasler's (1992) call for music pieces that come from the "private and personal domain".⁴⁴⁴ Pasler assesses McClary's approach to her feminist analysis of musical works as "not denying her subjectivity, her own social construction, nor that of music".⁴⁴⁵ Our intuitive and organic collaborative process and the resulting work also look to the subjective and personal, and bring in what Pasler calls "other feminine attributes - sociability, domesticity, and community".⁴⁴⁶ This project - to become *to the wider ocean* - was developed using one of most collaborative processes in the portfolio, next to *ELEGEIA* (for Anna) with Nikos Stavropoulos. However, while with Stavropoulos we developed a female vocal sound world, its compositional structuring, and used the evolving graphic score as collaborative and compositional tools, with McCombe, it was an exploration of female themes on which we embarked, developing a collaborative visual and aural world. My input into McCombe's compositional process took the form of vocal recordings of Hungarian lullabies as well as readings of Alison Croggon's poems. The structuring of the video footage and images was also quite collaborative. The main purpose of this breakdown is to give insight into how it is possible to create an international collaborative performance project using internet and digital technology, such as video-conferencing programme Skype™ for meetings, email and text messaging for correspondence, as well as large file-sharing platforms Dropbox and Hightail for sharing digital media, including audio and video recordings, scores, Sibelius files and photographs. I will also discuss our work together in terms of communication style between two women artists, which circumvents the 'composer as authority figure'⁴⁴⁷ to create a truly collaborative process resulting in a work that shows the embodiment of 'who women really are',⁴⁴⁸ specifically, who Christine McCombe and Anikó Tóth really are.

The method of collaboration took the form of weekly meetings via Skype™, as McCombe is based in Melbourne, Australia, while I am based in Manchester, UK. We

⁴⁴⁴ Pasler (1992), p. 205 (p. 4 online).

⁴⁴⁵ Pasler (1992), p. 204, (p.4 online).

⁴⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁷ Bosma (1996).

⁴⁴⁸ Pasler (1992), p. 203 (p. 3 online).

had to negotiate the nine- to eleven-hour time difference, as well as the prospect of never meeting personally during the collaborative process due to this distance. This had the effect of limiting the composer's ability to comment upon performance elements during the workshop performance of 2014, as well as focusing our meetings, which I will discuss in more detail shortly. The Skype™ meetings over time developed a particular structure, which happened organically, rather than something we agreed consciously. We usually began with a 'debrief' (or venting session), where we checked in emotionally, how we were physically, discussing stresses and concerns from our personal lives. Because of the themes with which we were engaging, including intimacy and close relationships and because of the limitations of time and body (physical tiredness for McCombe, as meetings were in the morning for me and nightly for her) our personal conversations became quite intimate over time. In the collaborative process, especially in dealing with these themes, it was important to create this level of intimacy and relationship because we began to bring out sub-themes for the work, organically. The second part of a typical meeting would be intellectual discussion on these sub-themes (such as breast-feeding in public, a hot topic in Anglo-Saxon countries like Australia, the UK and the US, from our experience), as well as a sharing of reading sources, visual stimuli, musical sources and textual stimuli. Once the sub-themes began to emerge and both of us had brought possible source material to the fore, we would set targets for ourselves and for each other, breaking them down into jobs we would achieve and share before the next meeting (with varying degrees of success).

This back and forth process of building a shared vision and themes for uniquely female collaborative work contrasts with other works in the portfolio; the creative process is most similar to that of *ELEGEIA* (for Anna) with Nikos Stavropoulos, but this is the only all-female team. This means the work comes from a uniquely female perspective on all fronts, not just in my personal performance. In this sense, it builds on works by female composer-performers like Meredith Monk, whose emotive vocal music is a direct expression of herself on stage; she also creates work 'on' others, initially with no score.⁴⁴⁹ Diamanda Galás, while dealing with political themes, also comes from a stimulus of personal emotion and experience in her works concerning the loss of her brother. In the interim between meetings, our target jobs included

⁴⁴⁹ Elliot (2006), p. 293.

gathering further materials to make up the audio-video content, and for McCombe, further development of the musical ideas. For example, the composer brought the suggestion of using Alison Croggon's heavily mother-themed poetry for the text upon which she would write the music, having gained permission from the poet for this purpose. Because of the beautiful sea and water imagery Croggon uses, this became a sub-theme McCombe and I were keen to explore, which led to a gathering of video of seascapes and water images that were personally meaningful. For example, I brought tide pool videos of the Pacific Ocean near my parents' home, which was to become the 'Rockpools' video (renamed 'Love Trips' in the world premiere of the completed piece) (**Appendix 1. Video 14.**), while McCombe brought lake images local to her in Australia. Another sub-theme the composer-video artist suggested included distance and connection, absence and presence,⁴⁵⁰ which tied into the way we developed our collaborative process - between two cultural worlds - and as a reflection of our own liminal cultural identities: McCombe's mother hails from Scotland, while she has been raised in Melbourne, Australia; my mother hails from Hungary, but I grew up in Los Angeles, California, USA and now live in England, UK.

For our theme of connection over distance and absence and presence, we collected images of handwritten letters between our mothers/mother figures and ourselves. I also brought and shared recordings of Hungarian lullabies (**Appendix 1. Audio 14.-17.**), which my mother had sung to me as a child, also recording my personal (spoken) reading of the four chosen Croggon poems which helped the composer's process in hearing it in my voice (**Appendix 1. Audio 13.**), giving a different perspective.⁴⁵¹ As the mother-daughter relationship can be so multi-faceted, we were looking to create layers of meaning through layers of media. For example, for the workshop performance, which focused very much on the mother-daughter connection over distance, featured video 'Across the Water' (**Appendix 1. Video 16.**), which layered my mother's 2010 recording of Hungarian folk song 'Túl a vízen zörög a jég'⁴⁵² - whose text is a conversation between two people separated by a body of water - over my video of the Pacific Ocean. In the 2014 workshop performance in Salford, UK, I also sang the song live, layering my own voice with my

⁴⁵⁰ McCombe (2014), 'Work Across Oceans: Online collaboration in *to the wider ocean*', no pagination.

⁴⁵¹ McCombe-Tóth (2014) interview.

⁴⁵² Tóth, Mary (2010), recording.

'far-off' mother's voice. I made recordings using Logic Pro, which I made into sharable audio files; other programmes used for sharing included music publishing program Sibelius, in which format the composer sent the various scores,⁴⁵³ which I could record and McCombe could experiment with tempo and revise her compositional work accordingly.⁴⁵⁴ Recordings, videos and photographs were all shared using Dropbox and Hightail large file-sharing platforms over the internet.

Aside from meetings, another two relevant collaborative tools were video recording and Skype™ during the technical and dress rehearsals on 25 March 2014 for the workshop performance that week at the Digital Performance Lab, Salford. My collaborator and I were able to discuss *in real time* the staging, final order of the as-of-yet modular poem settings, the dramaturgy of the piece - which included placing meaningful objects on stage and its pacing (**Appendix 18.**). She was also able to 'meet' the technical staff running the video during the performance, discussing logistics.⁴⁵⁵ While McCombe found it frustrating to be limited to Skype™ (which provides a two-dimensional picture of the space), "when I'm used to being in a space and being able to get the full picture", she found it "better than nothing, though, and gave me a sense of the pacing of the work".⁴⁵⁶ (**Appendix 20.**). She found the rehearsal video, taken at the same time as the Skype™ conversation, useful in that it "gave me another perspective, and, again, an insight into the pacing of the piece, as well as the order".⁴⁵⁷ In conclusion, for the workshop performance of *to the wider ocean* in 2014, the collaborative creative process between composer/video-artist Christine McCombe and myself was only made possible by the extensive use of internet-based technologies, including video-conferencing programme Skype™, email and text messaging, as well as large file-sharing platforms Dropbox and Hightail. It is clear this range of digital and internet-based platforms can be used

⁴⁵³ This proved helpful for learning the piece, as Sibelius has a play-back feature, where lines of music can be isolated or muted according to the listener's needs. The program has been useful in other collaborations, especially where rehearsal time with collaborative performers has been limited, as seems common due to time and financial constraints. (See *The Night Bride*; *Mary, Polly, Sukey, Jack and Jill*, and *Flight Paths*.)

⁴⁵⁴ McCombe (2014), 'Work Across Oceans: Online collaboration in *to the wider ocean*', no pagination.

⁴⁵⁵ McCombe (2014), 'Work Across Oceans: Online collaboration in *to the wider ocean*', no pagination.

⁴⁵⁶ McCombe/Tóth (2014) interview.

⁴⁵⁷ As the work at this stage was still modular, with discrete elements, we discussed several variations of order for this performance. Also, there were a few 'space holders' in the form of sound and video, which would be replaced by the settings of 'For Ben' (*spoken* in the 2014 workshop version) and 'Elegy'.

effectively to create a new work internationally, without the collaborators ever meeting.

The final performance, which took place at Peel Hall, Salford on 21 February 2015 with the Manchester Camerata, could also very well have taken place without the composer, with musical decisions being left to the performers and the musical director Gavin Wayte. Indeed, the full running order for the technicians had been finalised and shared via email, the final (including some new) videos could have been shared via the file-sharing platforms used previously, and rehearsals could have been run using the Skype™ technology. However, the possibility that the composer may be able to fly to Manchester, UK for the performance came to fruition, and the collaborative process could then take place on a human level. McCombe was able to attend the 20 February rehearsal - where we met in person for the first time during our two-year collaboration - and provide musical feedback directly to performers *in situ*, which was much more thorough, helpful and personal than the former option. Therefore, while the digital means for sharing work and communicating ‘across oceans’ (to borrow McCombe’s 2014 paper title)⁴⁵⁸ - and even closer to home⁴⁵⁹ - can aid a large part of a collaborative process for the creation of new work, meeting in person adds a fuller engagement with the work, certainly on the part of the previously distant composer.

9.2.1.1. Development of Video Works

While Christine McCombe is the main commissioned video artist who has compiled and created the video works featured in the performances of *to the wider ocean*, we both worked to collect video material for most of the video pieces (**Appendix 1. Videos 13, 14, 15, 16.**). I will discuss my personal involvement and how we worked together to bring each video to life. Each video brings intimate and personally relevant material from ‘private domain’ to a public work, which Pasler (1992) calls for.

⁴⁵⁸ McCombe (2014), ‘Work Across Oceans: Online collaboration in *to the wider ocean*’, no pagination.

⁴⁵⁹ Kilpatrick’s collaborative work with librettist Mike Sizemore and graphic artist David Kennedy in developing *The Night Bride* relied heavily on Skype, filesharing using Dropbox, and emailed conversations, for example. Also, when working collaboratively on the score, the composer and I shared Sibelius files back and forth, via email.

'Mothers and Daughters' - collaborative with Christine McCombe, 2014

This video features many personal correspondences with several mother figures in my life, as well as in the composer's life, along with personal photographs of our mothers and ourselves. McCombe provided photos of herself with her own daughters. We had discussed the importance of lullabies as ways of soothing children, on which theme I provided recordings of the Hungarian lullaby 'Tente, baba, tente' ('Sleep, baby, sleep') in lower and higher ranges. The video acts as a prologue to the live concert.

'Love Trips' (Aka Rock Pools) 2014 - collaborative with Christine McCombe

I brought video footage of the tide pools of the Pacific Ocean near where I grew up in the Los Angeles area. In a sense, the Pacific Ocean was like a mother, a womb-like safe place within which to play, explore, and become sun-kissed and was a significant part of my upbringing; this image of the Ocean as mother became the backdrop for the 'Love Trips' video. The sea imagery of Alison Croggon's poems about motherhood inspired the use of the ocean tide pool video footage.

'Across the water' 2014 - collaborative with Christine McCombe

The final collaborative video used in the 2014 workshop performance - 'Across the water' - featured my mother's voice singing folk song 'Túl a vízen zörög a jég' ('Across the water, the ice is beating'), the text of which appeals to the theme of distance and separation from our mothers and from our motherlands, Hungary for myself and Scotland for the composer.⁴⁶⁰ This separation theme also appears in 'Mothers and Daughters' in the form of written correspondence between mothers and daughters, as mentioned above.⁴⁶¹ I requested on the day of rehearsal for the premiere of the final piece that the 'Across the water' video be omitted, because the concert piece already speaks for itself and because the 'Mothers and Daughters' video summed up a similar sentiment. It seemed an unnecessary addendum for the

⁴⁶⁰ The text translates as: verse 1: Across the water the ice is beating down/ Well, my rose, are you still alive? / I am, but just barely;/ without you, time passes so slowly. verse 2: Don't worry, my rose, time will pass/ I'll wait for you for a year.

⁴⁶¹ McCombe (2014), 'Work Across Oceans: Online collaboration in *to the wider ocean*', no pagination.

live concert with beautiful playing by the Manchester Camerata, to which the composer-video artist agreed. It remains part of the piece's history and of our process, however.

'Glinting' - collaborative with Christine McCombe

One of the new videos for the 2015 premiere was 'Glinting', which featured my own Pacific Ocean videos from Monterey Bay, California, as well as lake views and other videos collected by McCombe. I named the video to reflect the treatment of light glinting on the water in each video source, and gave feedback to the video-artist/composer in terms of the order of each source.

Both the ocean video 'Seascapes' with singing bowl audio used in the workshop performance and the silent 'Lamps' video featuring the lighthouse (which replaced 'Seascapes' in the final version)⁴⁶² were solo creations by the McCombe; my sole feedback for 'Lamps' was to slow down the flashing of the light, as well as use the image more sparingly, with more black in between.⁴⁶³

9.2.2. The importance of creating new, female-themed works

In my July 2014 interview with Christine McCombe (**Appendix 20.**), we discussed the importance of female artists working collaboratively to create intimate and personal works that explore and share with an audience the female experience. I highlighted that history is written from a political perspective that that records 'factual' data via the written word, emphasising names of battles, male generals and politicians, but that women's experience in the 'domestic domain' is equally important and less often committed to written word, but, rather, is passed on orally. An example I gave is the stories my grandmother used to tell about her experiences during World War II; luckily she has written her memoirs, which feature the intimate details of how she raised her three small children while my grandfather was a prisoner in a gulag during

⁴⁶² The recorded and live singing bowl accompaniment was being replaced by the live music, and McCombe desired an even more static video for the very still and slow music of 'Lamps'.

⁴⁶³ Tóth (2015) email correspondence.

the war, bringing out the domestic, intimate and personal⁴⁶⁴ that is so important to tell as women artists. McCombe said,

As I age, the more I lean towards sharing my personal experiences through my art/compositions, which I have found works really well in collaboration. In fact, your and my collaboration has been a very organic evolution. As women, we can discuss our shared experience.⁴⁶⁵

She also discussed the importance of motherhood in her life and her initial reticence to share this with colleagues for fear of being stereotyped:

After I had my children, I struggled to decide whether to mention them – as a female composer, I thought, “Do I want to jeopardise my chances or credibility by seeming too ‘womanly’?” After a while, I realised that is a load of rubbish, and I just let myself be myself because, in the end, they are a part of my life, and they had a massive influence on how I create work, topics I explore and my perspective/ viewpoint. I saw things differently and prioritised differently.⁴⁶⁶

I responded by saying that the huge emotional impact of parenthood is not confined to the female parent, but is of human relevance, citing examples of male colleagues’ and composers’ strong emotional connection with their children, as well as their readiness to talk about their children’s impact on their work. It is, however, important to bring this out in new works, to which she responded:

Yes, also, I think it is important to share women’s stories in music because, especially in the very conservative art music circles, these were marginalised, which really bothered me. Twenty or thirty years ago, I got together with female colleagues and we performed works by women composers. This was important. They were ‘unearthed and celebrated’, which was important at the time to gain acceptance. It would be lovely to think that women composers were just part of the composer’s circle, rather than being called ‘women’ composers. In essence, while they were celebrated, ‘women’s art and women’s music’ were marginalised and isolated as outside the normal sphere of composition (and experience). Now, it makes me very happy to see half or two thirds of a music programme occupied by women composers and NO MENTION IS MADE OF THIS. This shows that it’s no longer an issue. It makes me very happy!⁴⁶⁷

⁴⁶⁴ McCombe and I had considered adding another layer of meaning by using a tape recording of my grandmother’s voice reading Hungarian folk stories, which my siblings and I had listened to when we were young.

⁴⁶⁵ McCombe (2014) personal interview.

⁴⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁷ Ibid.

I continued, saying that, while it is important to celebrate women's experience and art, but rather than as something 'other' than the 'mainstream' (traditionally male perspective), it can be viewed as one of the sides of the same coin, the human perspective and experience. The composer replied that it is strange to say that women's experience is 'outside of the mainstream', as women make up 51% of the population in Australia, for example.

9.3. Output and Conclusion – The Female Protagonist's Voice

The creation of *to the wider ocean* relied on layered meaning in the form of audio-visual treatment of our themes to be played along with the live concert version, as well as multiple layers of meaning, from the poetry to the music. In the 21 February 2015 world premiere performance, the visual and aural aspect of the piece made it less music theatre and more a concert piece. For this reason, we chose simple black concert attire to bring home the fact that I was performing the piece as myself (and as a traditional conduit for the expression of the composer's voice, but also for Croggon and for myself). This piece is unique in this portfolio in the sense that almost all the other pieces feature characters that I interpreted and created from the stimuli given by or developed with composers and librettists. The notable other exception is *ELEGEIA* (for Anna), in which I sing in my own voice, as a version of myself.

In *to the wider ocean*, McCombe and I worked together to bring out our unified voice as expressive female protagonists, ourselves. Although the piece does feature Hungarian folk songs and lullabies sung in a clear, straight tone closer to the folk style (though in a more Classically-trained quality), and also makes use of a Classical Contemporary voice, this is only part of the story. This performance, rather than a hybridisation of vocal styles, is a hybridisation of two storytelling voices presented in a multilayered way. In this way, Carolyn Abbate's definition of the narrating voice is present:

The *narrating voice*... is not merely an instrumental *imitation of singing*, but rather is marked by multiple disjunctions with the music surrounding it. These disjunctions... change from work to work; they are fugitive. They exist on many levels. I propose that we understand musical narration not as an omnipresent phenomenon, not as sonorous encoding of human events or

psychological states, but rather as a rare and peculiar *act*, a unique moment of performing narration within a surrounding music.⁴⁶⁸

This hybridised narrating *voice* tells the story of our personal experiences, relationships, memories and in the multilayered form of the collaborative video works using sea imagery ('Rock Pools' and 'Glinting'), writings from and photographs of our mothers and mother-figures ('Mothers and Daughters'), Alison Croggon's visceral and emotive poetry, and the live and recorded vocal and instrumental music, which I collaboratively communicated to the audience in performance. This piece, therefore, responds in a multilayered way to Jann Pasler's (1992) call for pieces from the personal and intimate domain and is another step in my personal quest for self-expression and for the embodiment of the female protagonist, in this case as a dual voice of myself and composer Christine McCombe.

Chapter Ten: *Mary, Polly, Sukey, Jack and Jill*

10.1. Research Context

10.1.1. Collaboration

My collaboration on *Mary, Polly, Sukey, Jack and Jill* with composer Marc Yeats began in December 2012. Upon reviewing the score and listening to the sound world, I found the piece interesting and musically challenging, as well as having scope for characterisation. The composer describes the piece thus:

In composing *Mary, Polly, Sukey, Jack and Jill* (sic), I wanted to create the opportunity to set several traditional nursery rhymes to my own original music, and, more importantly, by setting these rhymes to music, completely alter the emotional world they were originally intended to inhabit. In so doing, I have tried to write a contiguous drama where musical links between each of the songs can be picked up in all the pieces, and, to a lesser extent, through the content of the text and the activities of the characters where an on-going nonsense drama is unfolding. Performed with sufficient effect (and costume), the songs can be performed and viewed as a piece of music theatre... These are children's songs set for an adult audience, inhabiting a sometimes dark, turbulent, manic and scatty world.⁴⁶⁹

⁴⁶⁸ Abbate (1991), p. 19.

⁴⁶⁹ Yeats, Mark (2001) '*Mary, Polly, Sukey, Jack and Jill* (2000)'. [Online] <http://marc-yeats.co.uk/2011/12/mary-polly-sukie-jack-and-jill-2000/>.

Indeed, the composer's image of the vocalist dressed as Little Bo Peep in dolly makeup and holding a crook would be a playful contrast to the more serious works within this portfolio. Further, it would allow for a different perspective on the female protagonist, actually *highlighting* stereotypes and archetypes in a playful way, contrasting the more fully-rounded characterisation found in *Flight Paths* opera and *The Night Bride* and the emotional worlds of *ELEGEIA (for Anna)* and *to the wider ocean*.

Marc Yeats expressed his preference to be present at a workshop rehearsal to give guidance near the end of the rehearsal process, offering support and advice throughout my learning process previous to this, as well. In the end, due to the compact rehearsal process for the world premiere performance at the 2015 Salford Sonic Fusion Festival on the 21st February, the Manchester Camerata ensemble and conductor Gavin Wayte accepted the composer's guidance during the rehearsal on the 20th February. I requested composer feedback post-concert, instead, rather than take time away from critical rehearsals with the Ensemble. During my preparation, therefore, much of my collaborative work and discussion of interpretation took place between the conductor / musical director Gavin Wayte and me, which I will discuss herein.

10.1.2. Co-Creating Female Archetypes (voice and body)

Mary, Polly, Sukey, Jack and Jill is the one piece in this portfolio that I interpret to actively subvert the true/truthful female protagonist by actively creating a stereotype caricature with a range of archetypes within the songs. While the composer's intention is to create a "scatty world" wherein the "nonsense drama" unfolds, I felt I could interpret the costumed, doll-like character as a childish-childlike, sometimes hysterical character. My intention as a performer was to poke fun at the stereotypes and archetypes the non-human female character evoked and which I greatly enjoyed creating on stage. Not only did the musical indications aid in this characterisation, which I will discuss shortly, but the costume helped elucidate the composer's intentions and gave a visual stimulus for the exaggerated movements I could use and dynamic emotional changes present in the score.

Abbott (2008) defines the ‘framing narrative’ as a “narrative embedded in another narrative”, citing “classic examples... Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*... and *The Thousand and One Nights*”.⁴⁷⁰ In this case, the framing narrative is the hyper-emotional - one could say *hysterical* - narrative going on within the character embodied in the Little Bo Peep costume. While the composer himself defines this narrative as a “nonsense drama”,⁴⁷¹ which needs to be “performed with sufficient effect (and costume)”, the creation of its “scatty world” requires careful attention to the myriad clues given by the composer within the music. In this case, the performer must not only bring sufficient effect but sufficient *affect*. The Little Bo Peep costume indicated a ‘framing character’ from whom each song could pour, and within each song, there was also scope for characterisation. Little Bo Peep, whose irrational hysteria is indicated in the music by dramatic dynamic markings and the range of tempi, seems to be an unreliable narrator of seemingly innocuous nursery rhymes, which take on a schizophrenic interpretation in Marc Yeats’ score. Abbott continues:

Clearly there are advantages, besides willful obscurity, in handing narrative responsibility over to an untrustworthy narrator. One important advantage in such narratives is that narration itself - its difficulties, its liability to be subverted by one’s own interests and prejudices and blindnesses - becomes part of the subject.⁴⁷²

In *Mary, Polly, Sukey, Jack and Jill*, the composer, as creator of musical narrative, chose the unreliable narrator to bring out a highly dramatic non-story which could be interpreted and created by the performer. Marc Yeats’ “serving suggestion” is actually a photograph of a Barbie doll wearing a Little Bo Peep costume, without any textual explanation or interpretation of its meaning, **Image 6.**, below:

⁴⁷⁰ Abbott (2008), p. 28.

⁴⁷¹ Yeats (2001).

⁴⁷² Abbott (2008), p. 76.



serving suggestion!

Image 6. The composer Marc Yeat's serving suggestion from the score, left up to the performer's interpretation, p. 5. (*Mary, Polly, Sukey, Jack and Jill*).

Germaine Greer's (2000) *The Whole Woman*, a continuation of her 1970 polemic *The Female Eunuch*, explores what she calls the 'Feminine Ideal' in relation to the Barbie doll, saying that woman, while comprising more than half the world's population, has historically been given voice, not as herself, but as an object or a caricature of herself, much like the completely unanatomical Barbie doll.⁴⁷³ This highlights the need to tell women's stories from a human perspective and with humanity in mind. However, the power of *humour* in toppling stereotypes cannot be underestimated. In fact, my original work *Woman on a Box* uses humour to subvert the stereotype/archetype of the 'Feminine Ideal' in the form of a statue of the Virgin Mary, much revered in my Catholic upbringing as a standard to live up to.⁴⁷⁴ The Little Bo Peep costume played a key role in my creation of character for *Mary, Polly, Sukey, Jack and Jill*, as Stanislavski (1924/1991) emphasises: "A costume or an

⁴⁷³ Greer (2000), p. 30.

⁴⁷⁴ I intentionally say here that the *statue* is much revered, because what it represents is as unattainable for normal human women as becoming the statue itself. This is specifically what *Woman on a Box* plays on in a humorous way.

object appropriate to a stage figure ceases to be a simple material thing, it acquires a kind of sanctity for an actor”,⁴⁷⁵ shown in **Image 7.**, below:



Image 7. Little Bo Peep costume, following the composer’s “serving suggestion”. (*Mary, Polly, Sukey, Jack and Jill*). Photo by Nick Harrison, 2015.

The use of the ridiculous Bo Peep costume is a way to signpost the caricature nature of the ‘narrator’ of the song cycle. The composer’s mention of “a blond straw wig and dolly makeup” further confirmed to me that the character can be a stereotype, an unreal caricature. I interpreted this choice as being a call to poke fun at this female caricature who sings hysterically (‘Jack and Jill’), pedantically (‘Mary Had a Little Lamb’), and with a variety of archetypal characters, for example in ‘Oh, Dear’. I will discuss how the music, along with the costume, gave clear indications for emotional changes and acting suggestions, making the vocal style choices and physical characterisation a collaboration between composer (score and discussion), musical

⁴⁷⁵ Stanislavski (1924/1990), pp. 42-43.

director (rehearsals) and performer (rehearsals and on stage creation), as discussed by Bosma (1996).

In discussion about the sound quality of the voice the composer required, it was agreed that, whilst the range of the piece called for a Classical bent, the voice should be less operatic, more doll-like, simple and innocent. I took this to mean less use of vibrato generally, a thinner, less rich sound, and the importance of bringing out the text. While the composer asserted that the *tessitura* of the song cycle is generally low, upon working with the material, and in discussion with musical director Gavin Wayte, it was clear the opposite was the case. While this could normally affect clarity of text in performance, as mentioned by operatic mezzo-soprano Taylor Wilson (2011-2015), due to the familiarity of the nursery rhyme text to an English-speaking audience and some use of textual repetition, clarity would be slightly less of an issue. Indeed, I interpreted this overly-high voice as another key element in creating a stereotype of hyper-emotional, hysterical character. I will give a range of examples from the score which indicate emotional states and character stereotypes and archetypes which I brought out in performance through vocal characterisation - for example, screeching, breathy, non-vibrato versus *molto vibrato* - as well as physical characterisation through facial expression - like wide eyes and exaggerated blinking to bring out the doll-like, child-like innocence against the backdrop of slight insanity - and body movement - such as hand and arm gestures that bring out the dolly character, childish sway-back posture, and self-conscious swaying.

‘Mary Had a Little Lamb’

The piece begins *forte* on octave leaps, giving a see-saw effect and giving the effect of childishness in bars 10-13 “Mary had a” when the violin squeaks in with what sounds like “leettle” (bar 14), where the vocal line continues with “little lamb. Its fleece as white as snow”. The next two lines a similar rhythmic element “was sure to go!” on *crescendo*, and “which was against the rule” both imply a pedantic child copying a finger-wagging teacher (bar 45 and 54-56). I sang this while nodding my head emphatically on “the rule” while pouting my lips to create a pedantic, literal childish-looking character; I used a harsh vocal tone and non-vibrato line, as well (**Appendix 1. Video 19.**, 02:17-02:26):

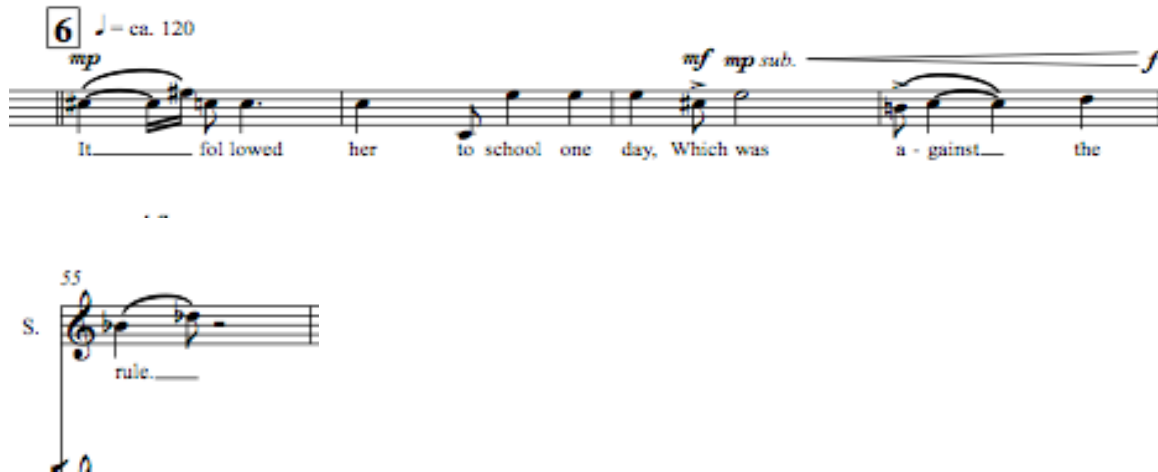


Figure 28. The composer's use of accents and crescendo, as well as rhythm, indicated the character of a finger-wagging, pedantic child.

The composer uses word painting, as suggested by Wilkins (2006), on bar 63, “laugh and shout”, and then we are back at the pedantic child on what sounds like a very simple 3/4 and 4/4 rhythm against the 7/8 of the ensemble, which I again brought out physically with head nods like a child imitating an adult wagging her finger. The accents and *forte* dynamic given in the music also indicate vehemence, and the doubling of the vocal line on the B6 (bar 68) by the clarinet brings out the screechy quality of the voice. I brought out the doll-like element suggested by the composer's Barbie doll reference with the straight hand gesture towards the end of the phrase (**Appendix 1. Video 19.**, 02:31-02:55).

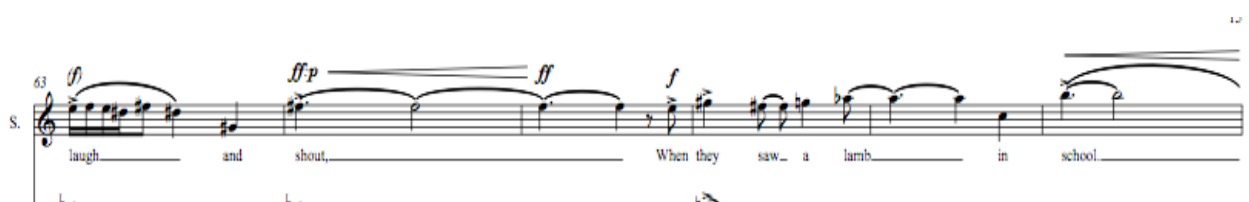


Figure 29. The composer's use of word painting, accents and *subito crescendi*, as well as rhythmic simplicity against a complex underscoring, indicated a finger-wagging pedantic child.

‘Baa, Baa, Black Sheep’

‘Baa, Baa, Black Sheep’ is a conversation between an asking character (Little Bo Peep, herself?) and the sheep. Bo Peep's questions are written lyrically, with *crescendo-decrescendos* throughout, and some accents. I used a mechanical

straight tone, as of a shepherdess-dolly calling her sheep. The large leaps and dynamic changes indicated to me a sense of calling across long distances.

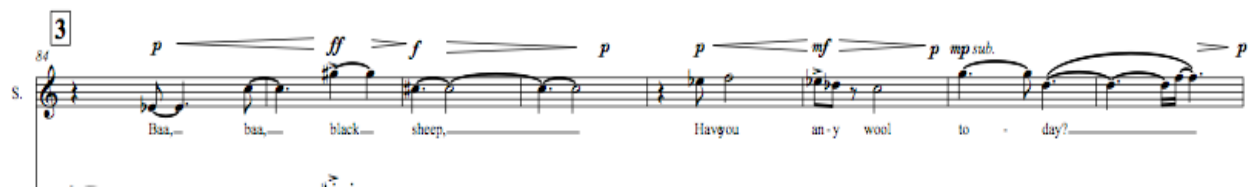


Figure 30. The composer's use of wide vocal leaps, accents and large dynamic shifts in short phrases gave a sense of calling across wide distances and required a legato vocal line. ('Baa, Baa, Black Sheep')

In contrast, as at rehearsal mark 7 (bar 113-116), the black sheep responds *molto animato* with strong accents, and the vowels are broken up with staccato articulation to show the bleating quality of the sheep's 'speech', while the orchestral *molto staccato* underscoring also evokes a prancing, light-footed sheep.

Figure 31. The composer's use of *molto staccato* and *molto animato* indications, accents, and word setting that breaks up the vocal line, for example on the word "bags", show a marked character shift.

To create this contrasting vocal tone, I made greater use of the ‘singer’s formant’ / resonance (known in musical theatre/pop circles as *twang*, coined by Jo Estill)⁴⁷⁶ to bring out a sharp, sheep-like quality to the voice (**Appendix 1. Video 19.**, 03:52-04:12).

‘Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star’

In ‘Twinkle, Twinkle’, the dreamy, wondering quality at the beginning is contrasted at bar 207 with the “slightly whispered” *pianissimo* passage, which has a distinctly childlike quality. At bar 211 in my score, I wrote, “Excited schoolgirl”, which is what the broken-up word setting indicated, and which I brought out using a breathy vocal tone (**Appendix 1. Video 19.**, 07:39-08:34).

The image shows a handwritten musical score for the song 'Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star'. The score is written on a system of staves for Soprano (S.), Piccolo (Picc.), Bass Clarinet (B. Cl.), Glockenspiel (Glock.), Violin (Vln.), Viola (Vla.), and Violoncello (Vc.). The Soprano part is highlighted with a purple background and includes the lyrics: 'light, Up a - bove the world so high, Like a dia - mond in the sky.' The score is marked with various dynamics including *mp*, *pp*, *p*, and *ppp*. There are handwritten annotations in blue and red ink. A blue note 'EXCITED SCHOOLGIRL' is written above the Soprano staff. A red note 'DOPPIO' is written above the Soprano staff, with a red arrow pointing to a measure marked '8' and 'ca. 140'. There are also circled numbers '1' and '2' in blue ink. The score is marked with a tempo of 'ca. 140' and a time signature of '8/8'.

Figure 32. The composer’s indication of a slightly whispered vocal line indicated an ‘excited schoolgirl’ character and contrasting vocal line to the lyrical vocal style that precedes it.

To add to the vocal characterisation, I continue to use facial expressions of excitedly wide eyes, as well as biting my lip in excitement. These physical indications help to bring out the childlike character of the overarching ‘framing character’ of the narrator Little Bo Peep, whose very name indicates diminution. The final intense *fortissimo* on

⁴⁷⁶ Kayes (2004).

the top B6 (bar 222-223, p. 25) is in contrast to the rest of the song, which is relatively quiet (09:10-09:24, **Appendix 1. Video 19.**). Does the ‘excited schoolgirl’ or Bo Peep herself suddenly lose her cool? Or is she suddenly over-excited? The piano and bassoon’s slow, *pesante* line finishes the piece, sounding like cartoon ‘tiptoeing’ music, with a sense of panic represented by the cello’s high *pianissimo* note, as in a quiet scream (**Appendix 1. Video 19.**, 09:23-09:42). As Bo Peep, I stand frozen:

The musical score for Figure 33 spans from bar 221 to 224. The vocal line (S.) begins with the lyrics 'Lit-tle star, Lit-tle star' and features a fortissimo (ff) dynamic at bar 222. The instrumental parts include Piccolo (Picc.), Bassoon (B. Cl.), Glockenspiel (Glock.), Violin (Vln.), Viola (Vla.), Cello/Double Bass (Ve.), and Piano (Pno.). The score includes various dynamics such as (mp), (p), (pp), (f), and (ppp), as well as performance instructions like 'ff intenso', 'p ma poco pesante', 'sul tasto', and 'To Xyl.'. A 'Long Pause' is indicated at the end of the vocal line.

Figure 33. *Fortissimo* in the vocal line at bar 222 indicates intense emotion, such as excitement or panic, while the final four bars evoke tiptoeing.

The intense emotion evident in the music here is in contrast to the doll-like veneer that pervades my physical and facial characterisation of Little Bo Peep, which remains unperturbed. In this sense, the nonsense drama is playing out in the music, but not in the body of the performer. This juxtaposition is in direct contrast to the emotive, truthful female protagonist embodied in other pieces in the portfolio, bringing an element of humour through stereotype. There are several ways to play this small dramatic section. Bo Peep could be wild with panic from a giant spider, or be hiding

behind a podium. Larger dramatic playing, almost to the level of grotesque, would not go amiss here. Either way, the dolly element must be maintained to show an unperturbed, unemotional character, despite the dramatic elements within the music. Or, the extremes of stereotyped emotion and female archetypes can be played with, as in the next piece.

‘Oh, Dear, What Can the Matter Be?’

This piece presents an opportunity to create a range of archetypal female characters: the Damsel in Distress, the Wronged Woman / Victim, the Seductress and the sulky teenaged Rebel. In discussion, musical director Gavin Wayte suggested this nursery rhyme is about sex. Indeed, the lyrics have similarities to Frank Loesser’s ‘Take Back Your Mink’ from his musical *Guys and Dolls*, sung by Hot Box dancer Adelaide (who fits the TVtropes.com archetype of Hooker with a Heart of Gold):⁴⁷⁷

Take back your mink,
Take back your pearls!
What made you think
That I was ‘one of those girls’?
...

I thought that each expensive gift you’d arranged
Was a token of your esteem,
But when I think of what you want in exchange,
It all seems a horrible dream!⁴⁷⁸

The lyrics of ‘Oh, dear’ could be read as gifts being promised in exchange for sexual favours: “Johnny’s so long at the fair./ He promised to buy me / A trinket to please me. And then, for a smile (in some texts “kiss”⁴⁷⁹) he vowed he would tease me.” In this case, the power is in Johnny’s hands. The archetypes within the nursery rhyme are lacking in agency, a sense of action or quest, as discussed by Germaine Greer (1971/2012) when she says:

[Woman] is not only taught to deny [the element of quest in her sexuality] in her sexual contacts, but... in all her contacts, from infancy onward, so that

⁴⁷⁷ Unknown author, [Online] <http://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/HookerWithAHeartOfGold>.

⁴⁷⁸ Loesser, Frank (1950).

⁴⁷⁹ Cuddon and Preston (1998), p. 604.

when she becomes aware of her sex the pattern has sufficient force of inertia to prevail over new forms of desire and curiosity.⁴⁸⁰

The character is acting the archetypal Damsel in Distress,⁴⁸¹ completely inert and awaiting her knight in shining armour in the form of Johnny. The stasis of waiting is highlighted by the extremely slow tempi indicated in the score, for example at the start of the piece, marked 52 beats per minute:

V
Oh, Dear, What Can The Matter Be?
Duration: 7'10"

1 ♩ = ca. 52

3/5 *pp* sotto voce

S. Oh, dear,

Picc.

B. Cl.

Glock. *pp*

Vln. arco con sord. *ppp* sempre

Vla. arco con sord. *ppp* sempre

Vc. arco con sord. *ppp* sempre

Pno. 1 ♩ = ca. 52 *p* loco

The musical score is for a piece titled 'Oh, Dear, What Can The Matter Be?' with a duration of 7'10". It is marked with a tempo of 1 ♩ = ca. 52. The score includes parts for Soprano (S.), Piccolo (Picc.), Bass Clarinet (B. Cl.), Glockenspiel (Glock.), Violin (Vln.), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Piano (Pno.). The Soprano part begins with the lyrics 'Oh, dear,'. The string parts (Vln., Vla., Vc.) are marked 'arco con sord.' and 'ppp sempre', indicating sustained, very soft playing. The Piano part begins with a piano (p) dynamic and includes a 'loco' marking. The score is numbered 33 in the top right corner.

Figure 34. The slow tempo marking and sustained strings indicate stasis in ‘Oh, Dear, What Can the Matter Be?’.

Also, the long, sustained notes in the strings reinforce the stasis; the intermittent descending lines in the glockenspiel and piano parts seem to evoke water dripping from the eaves, something the character may notice because there is so little action or movement in her. The intermittent repetition of the first line of the rhyme also

⁴⁸⁰ Greer (1971/2012), p. 78.

⁴⁸¹ Johnson, Robert L. ‘Feminine Archetypes: A Quaternity’, [Online] <http://jungian.info/library.cfm?idsLibrary=7>, accessed 19 March 2015.

shows emotional stasis; the character is fixated on her obsession. She is suspended in time, waiting. Her enjoyment and sense of self are wrapped up completely in whether Johnny will keep his promises or not. She is not a powerful or joyful character but one that can be made fun of by making her absurdity more pronounced through vocal and physical characterisation. To create a Wronged Woman / Victim character to contrast the childlike Damsel in Distress, for example, I looked to the operatic genre to bring a hyper-dramatic lyrical operatic vocal sound as found in Alban Berg's opera *Lulu* (1937/1979).⁴⁸²

Lulu is a kind of archetypical character, part whore, part Earth Mother; as an incarnation of female sexuality she moves with the inevitability and indifference of a force of nature through a series of love adventures that are in turn macabre, tragic, comic, grotesque, and sublime. (Footnote: Like many operatic *prima donne* she is eventually punished for her transgressions).⁴⁸³

Perhaps this Victim's punishment is continued stasis. This hyper-sexual Victim character (I call her 'Lulu' and Sexual Woman in the score) could be viewed as a sexually frustrated, tragic character, similar to Miss Donnithorne in Peter Maxwell Davies' *Miss Donnithorne's Maggot* (1974), who Paul Griffiths describes:

Miss Donnithorne was an Australian lady, apparently one of the models for Miss Havisham in Dickens's *Great Expectations*; jilted at the last minute, she became a recluse, and Davies's piece discovers her ranting among the remnants of her wedding cake, which is decorated with instrumentalists. Like the mad king, she has eight songs, though the fifth is a nocturne-interlude sung for her by the alto flute. Also as in the earlier work, the solo part is a tour de force of vocal effects, requiring a range of three octaves, though Miss Donnithorne is generally more songful in her madness than George III. The temperature of the ensemble music is also a little lower, more controlled, perhaps more lady-like, if still expecting wildly brilliant execution.⁴⁸⁴

Interestingly, *Mary, Polly, Sukey, Jack and Jill* is structurally similar to Maxwell Davies' *Maggot*, with seven movements, and features a slightly mad character⁴⁸⁵ suffering from unfulfilled desires. Musical director Gavin Wayte and I discussed the use of a very lyrical vocal tone making use of *molto vibrato* with excessive use of

⁴⁸² "Lulu." *The Oxford Dictionary of Music*, 2nd ed. rev. Ed. Michael Kennedy. *Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press. [Online] <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/opr/t237/e6297>, accessed 16 Jun. 2015.

⁴⁸³ Salzman (2002), p. 119.

⁴⁸⁴ Griffiths (undated), [Online] http://www.maxopus.com/work_detail.aspx?key=150.

⁴⁸⁵ Williams (2000).

portamento to bring out a sense of hyper-sensuality / unrequited sexuality at Section 5, bar 338 - Section 6, bars 340-343, “He promised to buy me / A trinket to please me / And then, for a smile”:

The image shows a handwritten musical score for a vocal and instrumental ensemble. The vocal part (Soprano) is marked with 'pp' (pianissimo) and 'whistfully' at bar 340, and 'mp' (mezzo-piano) and 'simplice' at bar 343. The lyrics are: "A trin - ket, To please me, And then, for a smile, Oh, he vowed he would". The instrumental parts include Piccolo (Picc.), Clarinet (Cl.), Glockenspiel (Glock.), Violin (Vln.), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Piano (Pno.). The Piano part is marked with 'pp' and 'loco'. The Violin and Viola parts are marked with 'pp espressivo' and 'espressivo'. The Clarinet part is marked with 'p' and 'dolce'. The Piccolo part is marked with 'p' and 'dolce'. The Glockenspiel part is marked with 'p' and 'dolce'. The score is divided into two systems, with the first system ending at bar 343 and the second system starting at bar 344. Handwritten notes 'WOMANLY' and 'CHILD LIKE' are written above the vocal part. The score is marked with '6' and '(8)' at the beginning of the two systems.

Figure 35. My marking of the score to bring out the ‘womanly’ Victim archetype, in contrast with the *simplice* voice used for the childlike persona. (Appendix 1. Video 19., 16:07-17:43).

In contrast to the Victim persona, I wanted to bring back the childlike character, changing to the *non vibrato*, *portamento*-free, slightly more twangy, childlike tone (which I marked as *simplice*) at bar 343 on “Oh, he vowed he would tease me/ He promised to bring me a bunch of blue ribbons,” changing back to the highly sexualised, *portamento* singing on bar 346, “to tie up my bonnie brown hair.” I also used *twang* quality to give a haranguing sound to the “Lulu” character in Section 4 (bar 361) and to bring out the *crescendo* from *f* to *ff* (Appendix 1. Video 19., 16:07-17:43). These ‘personality shifts’ were intended to create a sense of unsettledness in the audience. Upon developing this piece after consultation with Gavin, I used this character shift throughout, later also finding a stomping, sulky teenage character in

Figure 37.a shows a musical score for a vocal part (Soprano) and piano accompaniment. The vocal line is marked with various characterisations: "SEXUAL WOMAN" (in blue), "Angry" (in red), "Chest" (in red), and "Gift" (in blue). The lyrics are: "prom-ised to bring me... A bas-ket of pos-ies, A gar-land of lil-ies, A gift". The piano accompaniment includes parts for Flute (Fl.), Clarinet (Cl.), Glockenspiel (Glock.), and Piano (Pno.). The score is marked with dynamics such as *pp* and *p*.

Figure 37.a. The variety of vocal characterisations I marked in my score. (Appendix 1. Video 19., 17:43-20:24).

Figure 37.b shows a musical score for a vocal part (Soprano) and piano accompaniment. The vocal line is marked with various characterisations: "CHILDLIKE" (in blue), "semplio non vib" (in red), "LULU" (in blue), and "u" (in blue). The lyrics are: "of red-ros-es, A lit-tle straw hat... To set off the blue rib-bons, That tie up my bon-nie brown". The piano accompaniment includes parts for Flute (Fl.), Clarinet (Cl.), Glockenspiel (Glock.), Violin (Vln.), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Piano (Pno.). The score is marked with dynamics such as *ff*, *mf*, *p*, and *mf*.

Figure 37.b. The variety of vocal characterisations I marked in my score. (Appendix 1. Video 19., 17:43-20:24).

Figure 37.c. The variety of vocal characterisations I marked in my score. (Appendix 1. Video 19., 17:43-20:24).

To sum up, the archetypes in 'Oh, Dear, What Can the Matter Be' include the following: The little girl seems to fit the Damsel in Distress⁴⁸⁶ archetype, being "self-absorbed and aloof", disappointed that her needs have not been met, but lacking the ability to meet her own needs. She also has elements of the Seductress, who manipulates the world (and men) with promises of favours that are never fulfilled. The Lulu, unfulfilled woman character has elements of the Victim archetype, who is disappointed that all her youthful Seductress manipulations have left her unfulfilled. She takes no responsibility for her plight (of being left alone), but ceaselessly complains about her fate, having given up the fight to fulfil her own needs. The teenager is the Rebel, who "has decided all the rules and regulations are unfair [, ...having] no thought of learning how to use these same rules to her advantage."⁴⁸⁷ Feedback from the composer on the vocal and physical characterisation of the Bo

⁴⁸⁶ Johnson, Robert L. 'Feminine Archetypes: A Quaternity', [Online] <http://jungian.info/library.cfm?idsLibrary=7>, accessed 19 March 2015.

⁴⁸⁷ Johnson (no date).

Peep character and her archetypal avatars was very positive; the composer particularly liked the extra-musical huffing at Section 7.⁴⁸⁸

‘Jack and Jill’

While there is a range of pieces in the song cycle, I will highlight the final piece as fodder for archetype. The subject matter does include bodily injury: “Jack fell down and broke his crown/ And Jill came tumbling after,” and there are several musical indications in the score for portraying a hysterical storyteller. The repetition of the title several times gives a feel, from the beginning of stuttering, inward panic:

The image shows a handwritten musical score for a piece titled 'Jack and Jill' by G. Green. The score is for a song cycle, specifically Section VII. It features a vocal line (S.) and a piano accompaniment (Pno.) with various instruments (Picc., Cl., Xyl., Vln., Vla., Vc.). The score includes dynamic markings (f, p, mp, pp, sfz) and tempo markings (J = ca. 168). Handwritten notes in red and blue ink are present, including 'HYSTERICAL (contained)', 'PIANO', and 'G. Green'. The score is numbered 43.

Figure 38. The *forte* marking at the beginning with the stuttering rhythm and dynamic orchestral underlay give a sense of quiet panic, which I labelled ‘hysterical’.

The dynamic range throughout this piece is *mezzo-forte* to *fortissimo*, with quieter passages only appearing the accompaniment. In other words, panic grows

⁴⁸⁸ Yeats, Marc (2015) Feedback on world premiere performance of *Mary, Polly, Sukey, Jack and Jill*, 21 Feb 2015. Email, 27 Feb 2015.

throughout and manifests in screeching and screaming, such as at bars 422-426
(Appendix 1. Video 19., 22:00-22:08):

Figure 39. Panic sets in, with crescendo from the composer and a non-vibrato vocal tone from the performer.

And bars 452-459 (Appendix 1. Video 19., 22:46-23:02):

Figure 40. This phrase culminates in a word painting scream, as Bo Peep begins to lose control.

The final panicked scream comes at the *fortissimo* leaps of tenths at the end of the piece, at bars 562-570 (**Appendix 1. Video 19.**, 25:18-25:48):

Figure 41. Bo Peep's final descent into hysterical screams with leaps of tenths, using the break between high and chest range.

Due to the high to low *tessitura* (A#6-F#4) provided by the composer, the vocal qualities I used were the thin, screeched, non-vibrato sound at the top of the range, with a chest quality at the low. This use of voice, with a clear break, can symbolise a break with sanity and descent into madness, as it does in Peter Maxwell Davies' *Eight Songs for a Mad King*, where the vocalist as mad King George III uses the high falsetto tones of the voice with large leaps down into the baritone range.⁴⁸⁹ In his 2012 performance with Psappha Ensemble⁴⁹⁰, vocalist Kelvin Thomas moves through the vocal range and uses a range of vocal qualities to show the king's emotional and mental shifts, such as at, "Evacuate my people".⁴⁹¹ While Thomas consistently contorts his face with the emotional shifts, I chose to continue the doll-like veneer with a smiling expression (**Appendix 1. Video 19.**, 25:31-25:52), with

⁴⁸⁹ Williams (2000), p. 86.

⁴⁹⁰ Psappha Ensemble (2012) *Eight Songs for a Mad King*, with vocalist Kelvin Thomas. [Video] <http://www.psappha.com/watch-and-listen/vimeo/101079194>, last viewed 16 June 2015.

⁴⁹¹ Psappha (2012), (14:22).

only mild reaction to the orchestral final thirteen bars which give a sense of impending doom with the ascending piano octaves and descent into insanity in the quaver rhythms that evoke a ticking time bomb.

10.2. Performance Preparation and Evaluation

The challenges of this piece were also elements that brought out the tension in the music between the orchestra and the vocalist. For example, there was often little help within the accompaniment for finding pitches in the vocal line. In fact, in 'Polly, Put the Kettle On', for example, the accompaniment is in parallel minor seconds throughout the vocal line. Rhythmically, it was also challenging, with sudden metre and tempo changes in 'Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star', for example, which represent a mood shift. Breaking down the material over a two-year period, as well as working with the musical director to ensure an effective performance, were essential for familiarity with the piece. Upon evaluation of the performance, there could be even more scope for larger body movement and over-exaggeration of the emotional crises Little Bo Peep experiences, also through the use of more pronounced shifts in vocal quality. While the dolly veneer suggested by the composer's "serving suggestion" indicated to me Bo Peep's lack of connection with the emotional turmoil she undergoes - that is, a sense of being divorced from the nonsense drama - this could be brought out with more marked movement that switches suddenly between hysterical and the blank doll-like stare; these are considerations for future performances of the work. Further, more ensemble rehearsal time, or with a longer break between rehearsals, with the challenging material would not have gone amiss. Indeed, composer Marc Yeats responded to my question "What would you change about the rehearsal process?" thus:

I think that with another 3-hour session after a few days break, coming back afresh would have delivered a note-perfect performance. I got the impression that the rehearsals were very concentrated and compact across a short period of time. The music was still slightly unfamiliar in places for all concerned and this caused a number of material errors in the performance. These did not distract from the quality of the performance..., but [a] second performance with the same crew would nail it in every way!

His response to the performance was generally positive, however:

[Musically], I thought the performance caught the energy, sardonic, playful, dark and extreme nature of the music very well. The ensemble sounded great together and captured much of the detail and mood of the piece. All the musicians were excellent and Gavin [Wayte] conducted with great control and sensitivity. It was a formidable team!

He made special mention of the extra-musical vocal and acting elements, including 'huffing and puffing' during the angry teenager sections in 'Oh, Dear, What Can the Matter Be', which was a personal interpretation:

The performance was convincing. It was very well 'acted' dramatically, taking the spirit of the piece off the page and bringing it into the room. I loved the added sighs and attitude and the sometimes 'little girlie voice' and nursery rhyme appropriate gestures from Aniko. The staging worked very well and the whole experience looked and sounded great. The tempi for the piece were correct so the fast sections moved as intended allowing the very strong rhythmic nature of the piece to shine through. There was also great attention to detail from everyone - very important in my music. It was a demanding piece in many ways and was given a very strong, characterful premiere. I look forward to seeing (and sharing) the video.

Finally, he was also very pleased with the effect of the costume, saying, "The costume was a triumph and EXACTLY what I had imagined!"

10.3 Output and Conclusion

To sum up, to contrast the deeper female questing characters in the portfolio, in *Mary, Polly, Sukey, Jack and Jill*, I worked to play with archetypes and stereotypes within Marc Yeats' "nonsense drama". The piece's function in the portfolio, therefore, is to poke fun at the stereotypical, hysterical doll-like character so abhorred by Greer in *The Female Eunuch*. Bo Peep represents not 'who women really are', but is a modern representation of 'who women are not'. She is a character of fun and fooling whose appeal spanned the audience of very young children to adult. My collaborative co-creation of Bo Peep came in the choices of physical embodiment of the doll-like caricature, as well as the contrasting vocal qualities I developed to bring out Yeats' "scatty world" of Bo Peep's nonsense drama.

11. Conclusion

Salzman and Desi's (2009) definition of music theatre encompasses a range of vocal qualities and expressive styles:

... a good deal of music theater (or even small-scale opera) rejects the grandeur of grand opera for many reasons including economics, the preference for non projected voices (extended voice, pop, non-European styles or other kinds of singing that need to be amplified), a desire for audience immediacy, or a general esthetic or philosophical preference for small-scale, unpretentious, small-theater work - closer in many ways to contemporary dance, dance theater, new theater, and new performance art than to traditional opera. Small voices and small budgets require a small theater concept, a small theater, a small ensemble, and probably, amplification.⁴⁹²

The portfolio pieces present a range of music theatre premiere works featuring many of the above vocal and stage treatments. The overriding hypothesis of this portfolio of work is that I am building on the understanding of varied collaborative processes between composers and female vocalists in the creation of new works. Through each process, I begin a dialogue, rather than simply being an interpreter of the voice of composers and other collaborators. In commissioning works and choosing composers with whom to collaborate, I am actively redressing the balance of power in the creation of new works, acting with agency and subjectivity, rather than being an 'object' upon which collaborators can hang their works.

Further, the scale and diversity of the vocal styles and techniques explored can give insight for other vocalists looking to create hybrid genre pieces and encourage experimentation. In juxtaposing a wide range of vocal qualities and styles in a non-hierarchical way, that is, a way that does not necessarily prioritise the Classical vocal aesthetic, in the recontextualisation and hybridisation process I create a new expressive contemporary voice for the female protagonist. The fully-human embodiment through active use of space, of fully-embodied movement in physical tasks show the female protagonist in each work as having agency in her life. Each character retains her subjectivity, rather than becoming merely an object, a thing.⁴⁹³

⁴⁹² Salzman and Desi (2008) p.4.

⁴⁹³ Bordo (1993) referencing de Beauvoir (1949).

In looking to the future, I intend to continue to make collaborative works using devised theatre processes. Having rekindled my passion for movement, too, I look to include more dance and physical theatre again in my practice, bringing a juxtaposition of vocality to physicality.

12. Appendices

12.1. Appendix 1. Audio/Video Media (USB)

VIDEO

- Video 1 – *Woman on a Box* (UK premiere)
- Video 2 – *Boundless Space* (UK premiere)
- Video 3 – *Green Angel* (world premiere)
- Video 4 – *Flight Paths* (world premiere)
- Video 5 – *The Night Bride*, 2012 Vienna (world premiere)
- Video 6 - *The Night Bride*, 2014 Salford (UK premiere)
- Video 7 – *ELEGEIA*, 2014, ICMC performance (definitive)
- Video 8 – *ELEGEIA*, 2014, Leeds (UK premiere)
- Video 9 – *ELEGEIA*, 2013, Corfu, Greece (world premiere)
- Video 10 – *ELEGEIA*, 2014, Salford Sonic Fusion Festival
- Video 11 – *to the wider ocean*, 2015, Salford (world premiere)
- Video 12 – *to the wider ocean*, 2014, Salford (workshop)
- Video 13 – ‘Mothers and Daughters’, *to the wider ocean* (McCombe/Tóth)
- Video 14 – ‘Love Trips’ (AKA ‘Rockpools’), *to the wider ocean* (McCombe/Tóth)
- Video 15 – ‘Glinting’, *to the wider ocean* (McCombe/Tóth)
- Video 16 – ‘Across the Water’, *to the wider ocean*, workshop (Tóth/McCombe)
- Video 17 – ‘Seascapes’, *to the wider ocean*, workshop (McCombe)
- Video 18 – ‘Lamps’, *to the wider ocean* (McCombe)
- Video 19 – *Mary, Polly, Sukey, Jack and Jill* (world premiere)

AUDIO

- Audio 1 – ‘When I Was a Little Girl’, *Flight Paths* excerpt
- Audio 2 – *The Night Bride* demo
- Audio 3 – *100 Months* excerpt (Tóth)
- Audio 4 – *Extended Sounds* (Tóth)
- Audio 5 – *Anikó Test 1* (Stavropoulos)
- Audio 6 – *Anikó Test 2* (Tóth)
- Audio 7 – *Rough Scenes 1* (Stavropoulos)
- Audio 8 – *Rough Scenes 2* (Stavropoulos)
- Audio 9 – *Rough Scenes 3* (Stavropoulos)

- Audio 10 – *ELEGEIA*, tape only (Stavropoulos)
- Audio 11 – *ELEGEIA*, vox only (Tóth/Stavropoulos)
- Audio 12 – *ELEGEIA*, final mix, August 2013
- Audio 13 – *to the wider ocean* 2015 performance audio
- Audio 14 – Alison Croggon Poems, Reading (Tóth)
- Audio 15 – Hungarian Lullaby 1, 'Tente baba, tente' (C major)
- Audio 16 – Hungarian Lullaby 2, 'Tente, baba, tente' (G major)
- Audio 17 – Hungarian Lullaby 3, 'Csendben surranj'
- Audio 18 – Hungarian Lullaby 4, 'Aludj, baba

12.2. Appendix 2.

MIRRORS score excerpt 'Cornfield' by Jan Kopinski - a transcription of basic structures established and developed through rehearsals (and based on a recording of the piece developed out of group improvisation by the Reflektor Band, with Jan Kopinski's leadership), printed with kind permission, copyright 2006, Jan Kopinski.

Playing Copy. CORNFIELD. A Na Na Na J. Kopinski

* NO LYRICS

opt. ad lib E Major

VOX

PIANO INTRO

SAX SOLO

long lines

VIOLA

au

piano in 3rd

CUE

FIN

5bΔ

[B] <

VOX

1st time

2nd time

1st Pro, 2nd VOX, 3rd Pro Sax

3PT → repeat X3

[C]

VOX

IMPRESSONISTIC

P.P. ad lib.

ATMOSPHERICS AD LIB

whale desc.

re-ee

ROSE'S THEME

sax plays like

drums ad lib.

Dist. wave

ad lib.

sax harmonics

Piano

ESus F sus Bb A Cm

VOX

gentle echo (ethereal sigh)

ff. piano only












DA Bbm Abm

DRUMS GET BUSY

MIRRORS excerpt, 'Cornfield', Copyright 2006, Jan Kopinski - reproduced with kind permission of the composer

12.3. Appendix 3.

Vocalise/Vocal Wheeze (2008/2012) - my first graphic score exploring notation and execution of extended vocal techniques

<p></p> <p>indicates pitch</p> <p>Note use of tenor clef. The piece may, however, be transposed to voice-type. Relative pitches remain.</p>	<p></p> <p>Above-stave markings</p> <p>Indicate tongue & laryngeal (pharynx) positions, nasality, general mouth position.</p>	<p></p> <p>Below-stave markings</p> <p>Attenuate a capturing, in tenor form, the sound generated. Also, specific mouth shape, tempo, time indications</p>
<p></p> <p>Sinking pitch</p> <p>like a goat (P=glottal stops)</p> <p>harmonies are indicated in colour (my synaesthetic interpretation thereof)</p>	<p></p> <p>mouth closed (except breaths)</p> <p>mouth open</p> <p>palate (left is back - throat right is front - teeth)</p> <p>tongue position / location on palate</p> <p>larynx up (like "Bulgarian" voices)</p> <p>with the nose (e.g. nasal inbreath)</p> <p>Repeat N 3 times, e.g.</p>	<p>IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet) used:</p> <p>a = ah (car)</p> <p>e = eh (bed)</p> <p>i/i: = ee (pink/sheep)</p> <p>o = oh (horse)</p> <p>wa/h = (men)</p> <p>ə = schwa (doctor) (similar to ö)</p> <p>ɰ = dark American/Russian L</p> <p>er = American R (curled tongue)</p> <p>é = acute e (almost i), like German "stehn" or Hungarian "ét"</p> <p>ʔ = glottal stops</p> <p>(4") time indications for reference only (counts/beats).</p>
<p>GENERAL MARKINGS</p> <p>in 2 out breaths. size / width indicates volume / length of time</p> <p>airy sigh </p> <p>vocalised sigh </p> <p>crescendo/decrecendo (louder/quieter) </p> <p>hold for 2 seconds (24) </p> <p>segno/sign (repeat the section marked as in a new place. i.e. random notes) </p>	<p> : Repeat what is between once unless otherwise indicated. (or Repeat from beginning if only)</p> <p>P5 perfect 5th</p> <p>SIZE indicates volume</p> <p>BREATH indicates length/time</p> <p></p>	<p>CMPT PROJECT</p> <p>© 2006, 27 Nov</p> <p>Anikó Tóth Kárpáti</p> <p>* Glottal fry is a continuation of Britney Spears' "growl" attack of notes. (sounds like a motorcycle) i of i pages to follow</p>

Handwritten musical notation on a single staff, featuring various notes, rests, and dynamic markings. The notation includes:

- Notes: Quarter notes, eighth notes, and sixteenth notes, some with stems and beams.
- Rests: Half rests and whole rests.
- Dynamic markings: *mf* (mezzo-forte), *ff* (fortissimo), *pp* (pianissimo), *sfz* (sforzando), *acc.* (accelerando), *rit.* (ritardando), *tr.* (trill), *tr.* (trill), *tr.* (trill).
- Other markings: *mf* (mezzo-forte), *ff* (fortissimo), *pp* (pianissimo), *sfz* (sforzando), *acc.* (accelerando), *rit.* (ritardando), *tr.* (trill), *tr.* (trill), *tr.* (trill).

12.4. Appendix 4.

‘Skótóseme breakdown’

A break down of Diamanda Galás’ vocals
in her 1994 performance of ‘Skótóseme’

(0:24 - 1:10) - Vocal improvisation on “Aman!” (Mercy!) influenced by Greek traditional / pop singing, using an open nasal port, and essentially all embellishment (which is the expressive, emotive element in Greek and what I consider in Hungarian folk singing), accompaniment is spare and non-rhythmical.

(1:12 - 1:33) - Improvisation on the word ‘skótóseme’ (‘kill me’), with traditional rock set up, rock drums beating time rhythmically and guitar. The last letter E is embellished, to maintain what I call the emotive element.

(1:33 - 1:40) - Vocal imitation of a guitar (70’s Sesame Street), which comments on the video call dolphin noises / monkey noises.

(1:41 - 2:07) - Vocalisations that start bringing in rock distortion (false vocal folds) on vowel sounds, mostly Ah and Oh. At 1:49 there’s a Janis Joplin/car alarm sound in her voice, after which we have multiphonics, which brings out an operatic high vocal sound, with the gravelly sound bringing out a lower harmonic.

(2:08 - 2:17) - Rock groove with descending pitches (PITCHES: C4 - B3 - Bb3 - A3) more accurately on pitch to sing in parallel with the guitar, with some use of coming off pitch (liminal pitches / eighth-tones), on Ah-Yo-Ey with continued Aman embellishment (trills).

(2:18 - 2:30) - ‘Skótóseme’ word starts a new improvisation

(2:31 - 2:36) - Opening into vowels again.

(2:37 - 2:59) - Back into rock groove, on rap-like speech, “Saw your face, baby...” lyrics in English.

(3:00 - 3:24) - Janis Joplin multiphonic singing / rap back and forth over the rock groove continuing., lyrics in Spanish, “sangre” (blood)

(3:25) - Multiphonic scream / ululation ; Aman , Ma ma ma improve; Dolphin voice /

(4:08) - multiphonic scream (rock elements) / ululation opening to operatic sound; Skótóseme improv, ending ‘Skóto’

12.5. Appendix 5.

Analysis of Joan La Barbara's 'ShadowSong' (1979), using visual signifiers in a synaesthetic approach.

Here, I use visual imagery (as well as sound and spacial references), to include Rothko as an influencing force:

The piece begins in the left ear, giving a sense of disorientation: a close-mic-ed voice, dryly-whispering gibberish in an urgent tempo, with copious use of "S (white in a black, empty space). A very faint whispered gibberish voice, like smoke or mist (faint white on black), is layered on the centre right, at a slower tempo, like an echo - perhaps it was recorded in a resonant space, allowing the mic to pick up the echo. This voice feels slightly more voiced and moist, as if the breath had more water vapour in it.

(0:22) Another voice layer enters on the far centre-right, sounding like a whispered baby voice not unlike that of Jennifer Tilly's, starting with small, spaced out noises (small pink blobs), with more of a voiced-whisper (rather than completely unvoiced/dry); it could sound like a cartoon animal's voice, as one might see in Japanese cartoons by Studio Ghibli. 0:29 A layered full voice drone (like a thick, wide red-burgundy Rothko stripe, with yellow underlay) - with a (wall paint-brush-wide light blue) drone just below D4 - cuts through the continuing (white on black) whispered texture, with harmonics singing (tongue filtered) on Bb3 and A3 on "wee-ü, wee-ü, wee-ü" increasing in speed to a large vibrato, both drone layers increasing in volume, then drop out (0:36). The (pink) animal noises rise in pitch, giving a sense of further urgency. The (white) far left starting voice continues, but reveals another layer at 0:36 of a rasping (smoky grey) voice speaking gibberish, as of an old crone gasping her last breath while trying to tell her last witness the most important secret. These whispered layers continue with increased tempo (urgency), until at 0:49 another voiced drone on D builds up into the Rothko layering (adding navy blue and yellow), with more harmonics singing on "wee-ü" on Eb-D until 0:59. At 1:00, the (white and pink) whispered layers remain, with a new layer added on the right low diagonal (blood red), sounding like an Eastern European Roma telling her troubles to a friendly stranger.

(1:08) a hummed (warm peach-red) voice sings a semitone just above Db4 to D4, when a (yellow) layer of harmonics singing comes to the foreground, fluctuating between E4 and Eb4 until 1:15 (7").

These general textures continue until at 0:37, a new layer enters on the top left on a little girl voice (dark peach, slim line) on "AH-oh-uh-huh" (Bb4, F4, Ab, Ab). This voice sings in the centre and continues, as of a young woman testing an echo in a German vale.

The textures continue until at 2:09, a mouth-noise layer enters, playing with (white, semi-opaque) repeated sounds like, "Phew" (without the 'f' sound - "HHHYEW") at a medium tempo. More fricative mouth noises, then some ingressive⁴⁹⁴ fricative noises intersperse with the previously egressive⁴⁹⁵ sounds, at 2:23.

Continued texture until a harmonics drone layer crescendoes into a twangy (high larynx, like Bulgarian voices), open nasal port fundamental (Rothko reds to bright yellow), 2:55. Breathy "how" "hee-ü" on breathy glissandi (sirens) abound, with Rothko drone textures, crescendoing to almost silence (only pink animal noises) at 3:59.

CHANGE 4:00! Perfect 5 intervals sing "Ah-HAH-huh" repeatedly (on D4 and A4, adding Db4) increasing in volume and tempo, sounding like a car alarm (urgent). Unbearably loud and inexorably increasing in volume until loud "HUH!" at 4:57.

⁴⁹⁴ On an inhale.

⁴⁹⁵ On an exhale.

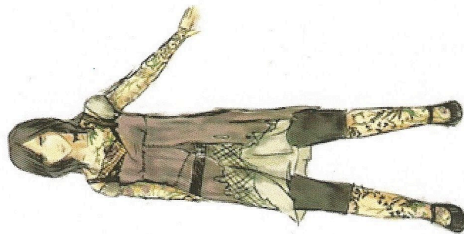
12.6. Appendix 6. *Green Angel* DVD cover



GREEN ANGEL

A NEW OPERA

Left on her own when her family dies in a terrible disaster, a young woman is haunted by loss and the past. Struggling to survive physically and emotionally in a place where nothing seems to grow and ashes are everywhere, she retreats into the ruined realm of the garden. But in destroying her feelings, she also begins to destroy herself, erasing the girl she's once been as she inks darkness into her skin...



GREEN ANGEL

has been developed as part of writer Adam Strickson's PhD in 'Adaptation and libretto in collaboration with the composer' (A University of Leeds/Opera North collaboration). The composer, Lauren Redhead, is studying for a PhD in Composition in the School of Music. The JO section of the opera was performed at New Stages in March 2011.

We are delighted to collaborate with caterwaul trio (Edd, Chris & Enrico) on this project. Based at the University of York's Music Research Centre, the group aims to workshop and perform new works written by up and coming composers from around Britain.

www.caterwaul.co.uk

12.7. Appendix 7. Green Angel programme

CAST

Old woman: Katherine Jarvis
Ash: Aniko Toth
Diamond: Edd Caine

ENSEMBLE

Singer (Ash): Lara de Belder
Accordion: Robin Bowles
Clarinet and bass clarinet: Christopher Leedham
Cello: Laura Pim
Percussion: Enrico Bertelli

Additional performers on tape:
 Eva Zöllner, Elizabeth Rutherford-Johnson, Lisa Colton

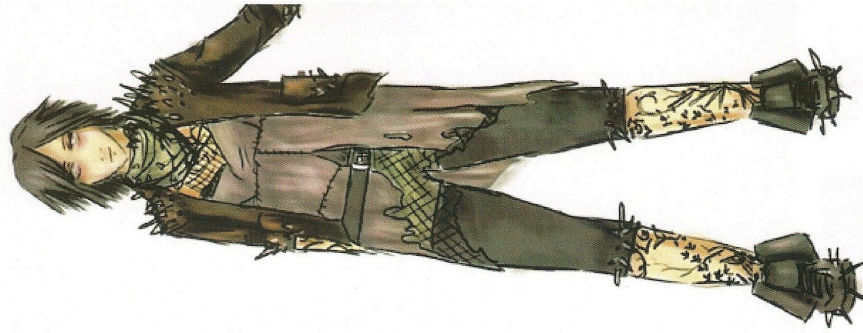
DESIGN

Set & lighting:
 Naomi Vandermolen
Costumes: Belizma Kelsall
Graphic design: Holly Strickson

ADVISORS

Advisory movement director: Chris Coe
Advisory drama director: Katie Beswick
Costume advisor: Naomi Parker

Adam and Lauren would like to thank all the team for six days of very hard work!



GREEN ANGEL is an adaptation of Alice Hoffman's haunting 2003 novella for young people produced after 9/11. She was responding to that event as well as her own experience of a life-threatening illness.

This adaptation is based on the JO-HA-KYU structure of fourteenth century Japanese Noh plays. Noh brings to life one person's inner emotional journey, mirrored by the changing seasons of the year. JO literally means 'opening', HA means 'development' and KYU has the sense of 'fast' or 'climax'. The drama starts slowly, then gradually and smoothly accelerates to an intense peak. In *Green Angel*, the prologue introduces the themes of the piece and JO describes the emotional turmoil of the main character. In HA her feelings are challenged. During an interlude, setting and costume are transformed. KYU is a celebratory dance.

The Noh often quotes from existing poetry to enlarge and intensify the experience; our libretto draws on English medieval sources, and German Lieder, in a similar fashion. The music is also a collage of quotation and self-quotation, a kaleidoscopic view of Ash's emotions informed by the conventions of opera and the Noh. We hope you will be drawn into Ash's experience and, through responding to the emotions and themes, will find an experience which touches the personal and the universal, much like the character of the original Noh plays.

Thanks to Dr Kara McKechnie, Professor Rachel Cowgill, Dominic Gray, Professor Derek Scott, Dr Martin Iddon, Ian Lindley, Andie Mills, Jessica Rowland, Sally Baxendale, Steve Ansell, Alice Clarke, Dave Barraclough, Dan Merrick and Tim Banks for their help and support. Many thanks to Alice Hoffman who has given her generous permission for this adaptation.

The performance last approximately 1 hr 30 mins.

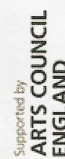
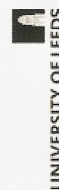
GREEN ANGEL

A NEW OPERA

Based on a story by Alice Hoffman
(Author of *Practical Magic* & screenwriter of *Independence Day*)

Composed by Lauren Redhead
Written and produced by Adam Strickson

I heard the whoosh of the fire
across the river



12.8. Appendix 8. Synopsis of *Green Angel* plot

Ash is a teenager who has lost her entire family in a fire that destroyed her entire village. In this quest archetype storyline, she works to find a meaning for living and for overcoming her survivor's guilt for her transformation into a new person: Green. Ash has survived her anguish by tattooing her arms with roses using the ashes and thorns around her, perhaps self-harming as a coping mechanism. She begins to meet various characters who help her: the Old Woman gives her birdseed when she is starving. She cannot see how it will sustain her, so angrily throws it on the ground. In the spring, she sees the seed has grown into green shoots to bring life to the landscape of ash and rubble, also bringing food. She meets Diamond, another casualty of the fire who shows her the burn scars on half his face, showing that she is not alone in her loss. She manages to find other living things, like birds, who seem to represent that she will fly into freedom⁴⁹⁶ and out of her misery into joy.

⁴⁹⁶ This is a recurring theme in Adam Strickson's work, which will be seen later in opera *Flight Paths*, which is part of the Wing Beats project highlighting women who find freedom and transformation through flight, be it through birds or planes.

12.9. Appendix 9. Flight Paths programme

— Wingbeats — *imove*

Wingbeats

Flight Paths

or Hope is the thing with feathers.

At The Spa, Bridlington
& Stage@leeds,
University of Leeds.





Flight Paths or Hope is the thing with feathers

This is the story of two 'flying' journeys, an inner journey of self discovery and an outer journey along an amazing coast. The events in Flight Paths takes place on a walk between Bampton Cliffs and Flamborough on midsummer's day 2011, and are based on the lives of real people.

At the beginning, the choir repeat the words 'Missing despondent female' taken from a Flamborough coastguards' report. Our 'despondent female' is Erin, a young African-Caribbean university student from Leeds with a two year old daughter. Her mother, who looks after the little girl, has become very ill and Erin will have to give up her studies. In a moment of despair, she remembers a caravan park where she once spent a holiday with her mum. She heads for the coast to end it all. But when she arrives at Bampton Cliffs she finds cars, hundreds of people and thousands of seabirds. Heading for the cliff edge, she literally runs into Ilona, an RSPB guide, who starts her on a rollercoaster journey of encounters with wildlife and people on the coastal path. She meets kittiwakes, gannets, farm birds and peregrines. She stumbles across 'Spitfire Irene', a 90 year old ex ATA (Air Transport Auxiliary) pilot who served in World War II. She is regaled by Linda, a karaoke singer on holiday at Thornwick Bay. 'Tombstoners' tempt her to jump at White Rock. She meets Vi, a lady from Haworth who lost her granddaughter to cancer. Will she be able to turn her life around by the end of the day, when she will reach South Landing beach after passing through a star of swords?

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 EAST RIDING OF YORKSHIRE COUNCIL


 The Spa BRIDLINGTON

The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development Europe Investing in rural areas

imove is primarily funded by Legacy Trust UK, an independent charity set up to create a lasting cultural and sporting legacy from the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

imove: a Cultural Olympiad programme in Yorkshire. www.imoveand.com



Flight Paths or Hope is the thing with feathers.

A Wingbeats performance commissioned by *imove* and part of the Cultural Olympiad in Yorkshire.

Written and produced by **Adam Strickson**
 Composed by **Steve Kilpatrick**
 Choreographed by **Balbir Singh**
 Musical Director: **Jonathan Lo**
 Choir trainer: **Em Whitfield-Brooks**
 Design: **Jane Robinson with Vivien Mousdell & Sarah Riley**
 Lightweight Design: **Chris Squire and Impossible Theatre**
 Lighting Design: **Paul Halgarth**
 Stage Manager: **James Thompson**
 Wingbeats Project Director: **Lara Goodband**
 Wingbeats Producer for *imove*: **Jenny Harris**

Ensemble

Voxare Quartet
 Erik Peterson, Emily Ondracek-Peterson, Ilya Movchan, Alisa Liubarskaya

Bridlington Community Chorus

Buckrose Concert Band
 Conductor: Rebecca Heywood

Cast

Erin, a young woman from Leeds: Nadine Mortimer-Smith

Ilona, an RSPB guide at Bampton Cliffs
 and **Linda**, a holidaymaker: Aniko Toth

Spitfire Irene, a ninety year old ex Second World War pilot
 and **Vi**, a Yorkshire grandmother: Taylor Wilson.

Bird Dancers

Balbir Singh Dance Company:
 Charlotte Fisher, Samantha Broadbent, Josie McCartney

School of Performance and Cultural Industries, University of Leeds:
 Leyla Land, Leah Pejica, Charlotte

East Riding Youth Dance Company:
 Katey Poutch, Beth Smart, Mollie Smith, Kodie Dixon

Farm Birds

Flamborough CE Primary School Years 4 & 5 (performing in Bridlington)
Lindley Junior School Choir (performing in Leeds)

Tombstoners

Sean: Jon Neaves
Niner: Mikey McCulloch
Cattee: Georgia Mason

Thanks to

Matthew Davison, Caroline Langham, Sita Papat, Steve Ansell and the School of Performance and Cultural Industries (University of Leeds); Andrew Aldis and the staff of The Spa, Bridlington; Cheryl Govan and The Stephen Joseph Theatre, Scarborough; Shanaad Tomlin; Dawn Holgate & Michelle McCoy at East Riding Youth Dance; Steve Race and the staff at RSPB Bampton Cliffs; Opera North, and the members of Wingbeats Cultural Association.

Programme designed by Holly Strickson

12.10. Appendix 10. Character Descriptions, *Ilona* - excerpt, Adam Strickson

Ilona (lyric soprano)

Aged 33. She is from Huddersfield but lives in north Hull, where she went to university. Her family is Hungarian and her grandmother was a Hungarian Jew (and pianist) who, after the liberation of the concentration camps, came to England and married George, whom she met in the mill. Her family, however, has always kept a strong Hungarian culture in the family and her mother met her husband in a Hungarian youth organisation. Ilona knows Hungarian folk song and sometimes sings snatches of it. Her Dad kept and bred caged birds, budgerigars, and this is where her love of birds came from. She was brought up near Beaumont Park in Huddersfield and has always loved the outdoors. She was an RSPB volunteer as a student, worked on remote islands, and always wanted to work for the RSPB; she finally managed to achieve this four years ago after working with Groundwork, BTCV and other environmental organisation in Hull and Leeds, plus bar work. She has a patience and a stillness about her. She lives with her boyfriend, a history teacher, whom she met through a mutual friend six years ago but she's not sure she'd like to get married to him. She still remains something of a loner and is absolutely passionate about wildlife, the cliffs, sea-swimming and Turkish food. She is fit, slight and looks after herself. She has no real eye for fashion and likes to be in comfortable outdoor clothes and good shoes. She likes Coldplay, Elbow and similar slowly emoting music. Not religious. She likes her KA, which she bought new with some money from her parents, whom she has quite a close relationship with. She has a brother four years older than herself but is somewhat distant from him, geographically and emotionally. Her name means 'torch' or 'moon', implying that she is some kind of beacon or mentor for Erin.

12.11. Appendix 11. *The Night Bride* Programme Notes

UK Premiere, Salford, UK, 2014

The Night Bride (2012)

by Stephen Kilpatrick, libretto Mike Sizemore (UK premiere)

The Night Bride, premiered in Vienna with Psappha Ensemble's Tim Williams on cimbalom, is a music theatre piece for soprano, vibraphone and fixed medium features US/Hungarian vocalist Anikó Tóth as *Anna* and as the *Brides/Narrator* on fixed medium, with Italian percussionist Enrico Bertelli. The piece began as a short story inspired by the Bluebeard story and Hungarian folk story *Molnár Anna*.

Stephen Kilpatrick studied composition and musicology at the Universities of Manchester and Salford. He has also studied privately with Michael Finnissy. He has composed for Psappha's Richard Casey and Tim Williams, Expatrio, Rarescale and Voxare. In 2010, his opera *Flight Paths* was commissioned as part of the 2012 Cultural Olympiad and was premiered in Bridlington and Leeds in 2011. As a commercial composer, he has composed music for BBC Radio Four, Channel 4 and Capcom, and he has worked as composer and sound designer on a number of contemporary theatre projects.

Mike Sizemore created the television show concept *Slingers*, which is currently in pre-production, and he is working on a Sci-Fi script which several major Hollywood studios are interested in developing. To date, he has sold three television pilot scripts for the US market. His most recent work includes a stage adaptation of *Howl's Moving Castle*, starring Stephen Fry, and the web series *Caper*, featuring Scott Bakula.

Anikó Tóth (Soprano) was raised singing Hungarian folk and choral music, and has since expanded into Classical, Contemporary Classical and Jazz; she is currently exploring extended vocal techniques. Trained in Los Angeles, at Hungary's Franz Liszt Music Academy and in the UK, she has performed in the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion (LA), the Millennium Theatre (Budapest), the Royal Albert Hall (London), the Bridgewater Hall (Manchester) and The Sage (Gateshead). Anikó created the roles of *Ilona* and *Linda* in contemporary opera *Flight Paths*, one of the curated strands of the 2012 Olympic celebrations. Performing with a variety of collaborators, from Meredith Monk to Jan Kopinski to Manchester's Hallé Choir, she has been broadcast on BBC Four, BBC Radio 3 & 4, PBS (USA), and Bartók Rádió (Hungary).

Enrico Bertelli Dr. Enrico Bertelli is a cross-media, technology-mediated performer, teacher and researcher. His commissions include New Music New Media (Aldeburgh & Kings Place) and Hack the Barbican. Co-curator of *Sensorium* (£13k) (Dublin) funded by the Irish Arts Council (2010); Artist in Residence with Atelier L'Arsenale (Venice), Ensemble Modern (Innsbruck), Ensemble Recherche (Freiburg). 8+ years experience in one-to-one and Whole Class Instrumental Tuition. Part-time lecturer at the University of York. Designer of *Italian for Musicians*, to be published on *TuttilItalia*. Featured on *New Scientist*, *ScreamingGoatTV* and *Nonclassical*. Next England tour with *SpaceFlight*, recipient of *Emergency Excellence Award* and *Wellcome Trust*. A technology enthusiast, he builds digital instruments and theorises new forms of performance practice.

12.12. Appendix 12. The Night Bride score 1 excerpt, Section B
with performer markings, showing additional word setting changes

Anna, aren't you listening?
Anna, aren't you scared?

Libretto by Mike Sizemore Music by Stephen Kilpatrick

A ♩ = 70 *gähle*

Soprano

A ♩ = 70
On cue *Stomp* *f* *determined* *naïve* *ff* *girl!*

Cimbalom

ppp *f* *Red.* *mf*

Cim.

B

10 In a folk idiom *Defiant*

S. *mf* You say I was to be marr-ied. You say that this man

B *that*

Cim. *mf* *p* *Red.*

15

S. was my hus band to be (Ah) you

Cim.

Chatter

18

S. *say this was the day I dreamed of. You*

Cim.

Red.

3

21

S. *said all this, not me. I am not that*

Cim.

Red.

Triumphant a tempo

25

S. *girl I am not that girl, I am not that girl.*

Cim.

Red.

29

S.

Cim.

Red.

mp < mf

p

mp

Night finds the forest...

12.13. Appendix 13. *The Night Bride* comic excerpt, with kind permission from comic artist David Kennedy and writer Mike Sizemore.



12.14. Appendix 14. *ELEGEIA* Evolving Score

12.14.1. *Extended Sounds* list exploring graphic notation - Tóth




Anikó extended sounds:

Suggestions for notation

Inspired by *100 Mouths*, graphic novel by John Hinckleton

1. Exhale motorbike / vocal fry 
2. Inhale vocal fry (zombie) 
 - a. Open nasal flap 
 - b. Closed nasal flap 
3. False vocal folds (pooing) grunts, catches
4. Glottal on inhale (silent laughing) –staccato fast  (???)
5. Ha exhale (non vocalised)

Tongue

6. T knocking on hard palate 
7. Clicks 
8. Squish and spit sounds (slug) 

Teeth

9. Suck teeth, lips (smacking)
10. Suck teeth (gasp as if something hurts)
11. Voiced sounds
12. Inward crying/moaning (behind the nose, midrange)
13. high puppy dog
14. Leel-leel with harmonics
15. high larynx – old lady/child falsetto (tongue tense)

Harmonics

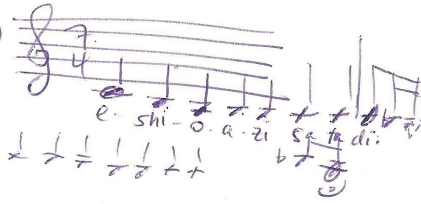
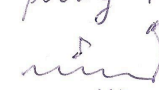



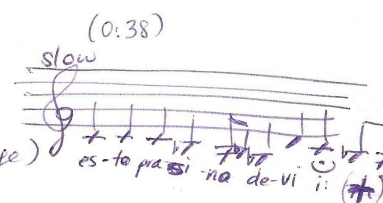



16. Fatima Miranda youtube (Skarumauela)
17. Whistle register – high vocal fry to get there → I would need to work on these!

12.14.2. Anikó Test 1

graphic mockup of Stavropoulos recorded mockup,
which used Miroloi media

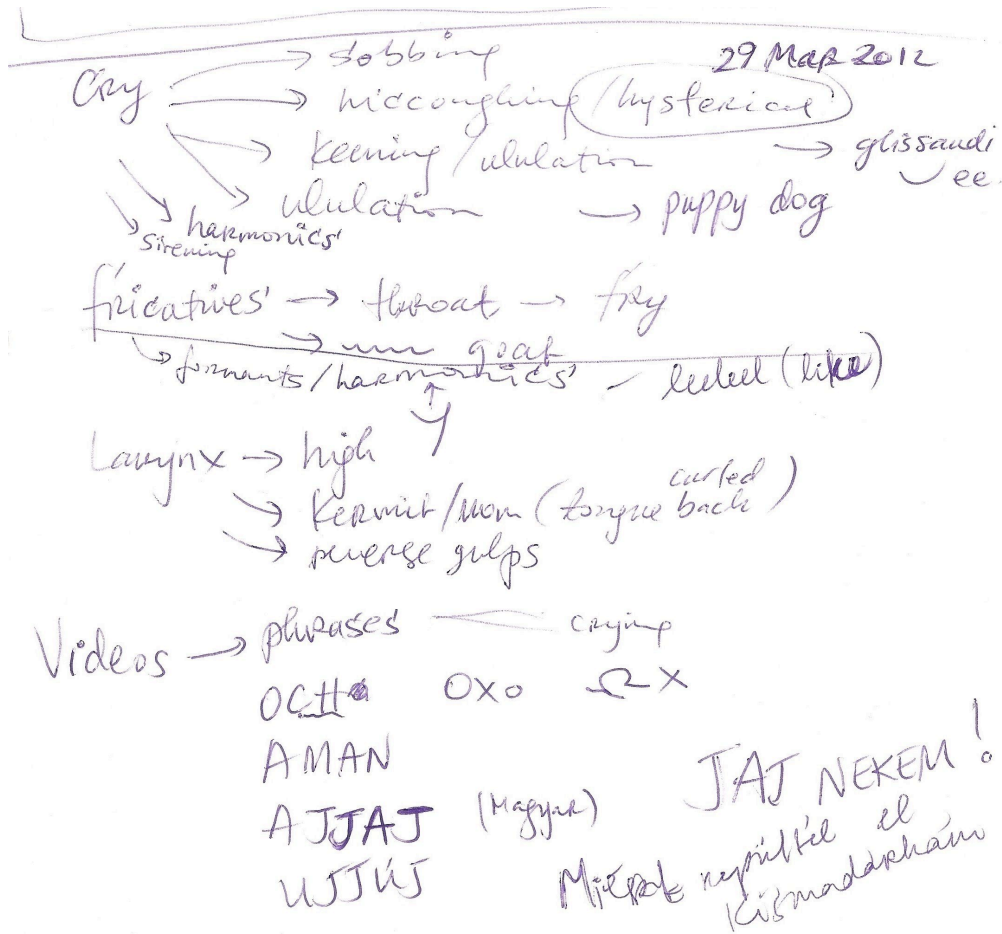
28 Feb. 2012
transcription of Stavropoulos folk female

(exhale) Test I. Anikos

- ① Inhale vocal fry - open nasal
- ② ^{eshivazisara} ~~Sata~~ di: Sing (midrange) (cry) 
- ③ sharp inhale (pause)
- ④ i: (m3↑) (cry)
- ⑤ poing (ah) voice (short)
- ⑥  oo: (Miroloi)
- ⑦  → mm vocal fry (AH) (0:27) →
- ⑧ Monokopidi:  (YELL)
- ⑨ poing (ah)
- ⑩  Oos Kungomado
Text
- ⑪ poing (ah-oh-a-wow)
- ⑫  ~~es-to~~ prasino dev: → (midrange)  (0:38) slow
- ⑬ posmandeexo (?) (falsetto)
- ⑭  +  (cry)
- ⑮ posman kufado (?) (falsetto)
- ⑯ 
- ⑰ dina postavivias (?) (falsetto)
gyina
- ⑱ a ≡ unvoiced threatening exhale (long)
- ⑲ dina posdin viatas (falsetto) (?) → sent to Dropbox
gy

12.14.3. Recording directions and notes

from the composer based on my previously recorded sounds



12.14.4. *Rough Scenes* written notes

on Stavropoulos' sketch created from 29 March 2012 recordings of my improvisations

Scene 1

1. High screaming – need to work out technique (very hard on voice)
2. Tongues
3. Fourth section
 - a. A, U, O, leel (harmonics) + tape + ugh!
 - b. Electroacoustic (silvery sword sound) + A, U, O, leel (harmonics) + squeal, scream + white noise
 - c. Tongues, crying → (LONGER, more)
 - d. In gasp * + electroacoustic Hey-ah → high squeals (DANCE)

Scene 2 (tape section only)

1. *gasping consonants
2. ki-ki- (crying) Cresc... howling werewolf
3. go-go-go-go = ha ha (RED)
4. No, no, (ululating)

Scene 3

1. DRONE → with text on top:

Miért repültél el tőlem, kismadárkám?
Gyere haza, kismadárkám, madárkám!

NOTES:

Scene 2 – NS suggests something similar on top. Anikó: muttering, tongues?
Low guttural, nasal?

Scene 3 – LOVE the werewolf howl at end. Could that be in the live score, please? Could feature more.

NS thinking slower melodies with longer buildup.

Scene 4, perhaps – recap/develop Scene 1 material.

12.14.5. Score 1, September 2012

[illegible]

⑥ ₇ X

V Arrgh... 2:39

Eka-aka-hey-ah 2:47

2:44

2:44

1

2

highest
possible
register

voice → Ah oh

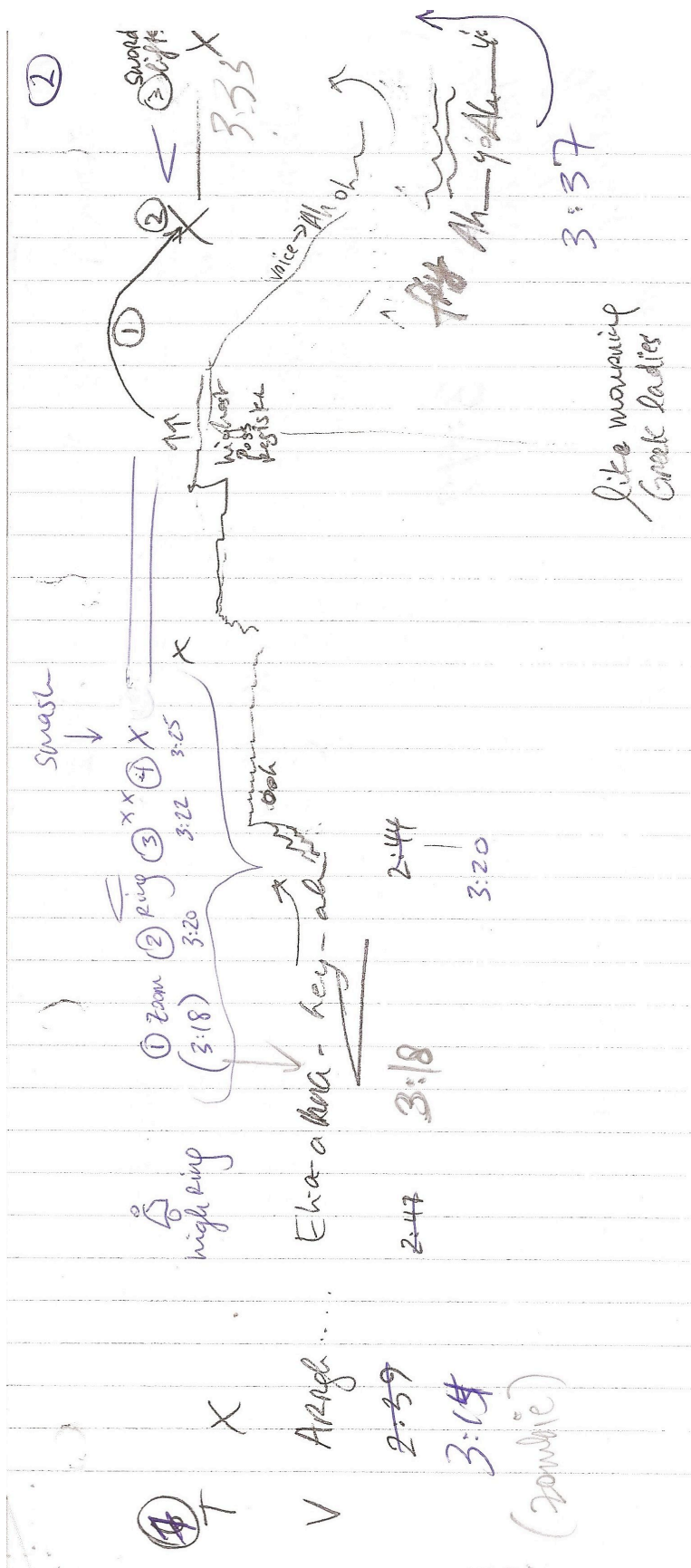
Ah-ya-ya-ya

like mourning
Greek ladies

(March 2013-June 2013)

206

207



①

geschlossen

① 6:46 - 7:00 slow

Handwritten musical notation for the first system of the song 'Kiss Me, Kiss Me'. The notation is on a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The tempo is marked '6:46 - 7:00 slow'. The lyrics are 'Mi - é - rt, Mi - é - rt ve-pül - té - l el', with the word 've-pül' written with a tilde over the 'p'. The melody consists of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some beamed sixteenth notes. There are some handwritten markings above the staff, including a '3' and a tilde over a note.

Mi - é - rt, Mi - é - rt ve-pül - té - l el

7:05-7:32 (2)

Mi- é- rt, mi - é rt re-pé - lé-lé-lé -
tá-le m, Kis-ma-da r-
ká- (m)?

7:38 (3)

Handwritten musical score for three staves. The lyrics are in Hungarian. The first staff contains the lyrics: "Mi- é- ééé - rt re-pül- tel el-". The second staff contains the lyrics: "to- lom, Ki- s ma- dár kam,". The third staff contains the lyrics: "Kis-na-de - R ka - m?". There are various musical notations, including notes, rests, and bar lines. A large circle is drawn around the word "dár" in the second staff.

slightly sharp ↗

NOVELLO

④ 8:11-8:28 Draft 1

2

Gye-re ha-za, Gye-re ha-za, Kis-ma-

(all flat) Gye-re ha-za, Gye-re ha-za, Kis

Kis-ma heartbeats dar kainu (on pitch)

⑤ 8:35

Gye-re ha-za, Gye-re ha-za,

Kis-ma dar-kainu, ma-dar-kainu.

12.14.7. Rehearsal notes, Stavropoulos, 13 March 2013
recording session

13 Mar 2013

Qs:

- Will AT need click track lead in for hit points?
- Performance → how to "conduct" in for start point

Idea for Second Section (opening held)

~~Important~~ Stable pitches (A4 Bb) Coming out of
Clotted (noisy) attacks. (Could be appearing as
a reaction to events on the tape).

Add to above (Glissandi (very slow)
around the pitch - Change pitch and
change Vowel/noise - At the same
rate

Reverts the above with crying
(not sex) reacting to event in the tape

Key

T = tape


V = voice

→ X = hit point (tape)
(usually with time indication)

* = gasp (voice) / in breath
(as indicated)

 = sirening pitch

 = vocal fry

*  * = suck teeth

 = shaking teeth


ugh! = guttural exhale/sigh
(glottal stop + sigh)

→ ? = with question intonation
(going up in pitch at end)

L = nasal port ^{short} open
(soft palate inhale)
gasp

 = tacet (Rest)

→ 0:10 = time (to sync with tape)
indicator

 = mirolol-style vocal shake

EUEEIA transcription/mnemonics
Aniko Totu

Letters

A' = bright a (Texan hi')

O' = dark o (Lord)

u = dark, long oo (food)

EH = (bēd)

E = acute e (German steht)

O = long, dark (German höh)

? = glottal stop (uh-oh)

C6 = indicates pitch

A9 = }

B7 ↔ Bb = fluctuating between
pitches

ng = as in ("sing")

ℓ = tongue engaged
in "Russian ℓ"

= intervals =

Π = tritone (aug 4/dim 5)

P4↑ = up a perfect 4th

♯ = slightly sharp

♭ = slightly flat

// = finish

③

ΕΛΛΕΓΕΙΑ - Corfu 2013, July

ΤΟΤΗ/STARROPOLIS

⑪	<p>T DRONE (3) RES (4:40-41) → (4:45)</p> <p>wildlife crickets 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (4:45)</p> <p>DRONE A13 ⇒ (4:48)</p> <p>✓ B₆^a ↔ B₆^b → ugh! (4:44)</p> <p>fly "Eh!" (4:48)</p> <p>DAδ (0w) (4:50)</p> <p>DS (0w) (4:50)</p>
⑫	<p>T</p> <p>✓</p>
⑬	<p>T</p> <p>✓</p>
⑭	<p>T</p> <p>✓</p>
⑮	<p>T</p> <p>✓</p>

SECTION II ELEGIA JUNE 2013 NS & AT

⑨ T m m small birds 7:34 - 37

DRONE on A³

keening

howl

so (melisma)

"Miért repültél el tőlem, Kismadárkám?"

hit points 7:38 - 8:03

8:06 Eb8 ①

8:09 Eb8 ②

8:10 Eb8 ③

Harmonics

plucked on F

8:51 howl

A⁴ → C⁵

⑩ T "Gyere haza, Kismadárkám, * * * madárkám!" ④

8:11 - 8:28

8:25 - 8:34 hit points

8:35 - 8:52 hit points

8:41 bark ①

"Gyere haza, Kismadárkám, * * * madárkám!" ⑤

high Note

8:57 Raygun

9:00

9:02

⑪ T ♀ high Ring on Eb (8:55 - 57)

freq

⑫ T ♀ high Ring (3")

9:03

9:06

9:10 (2")

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Final

①

① 6:46 - 7:00 slow

*close
to mid*

Mi - é - rt, Mi - é - rt re-pül - té - l el ;
Ki - s ma - dá kám má ?

7:05 - 7:32 ②

Mi - é - rt, mi - é rt re-pü - l té - l el -
tö - le m, Kis - ma - da r -

7:38 ③

Mi - é - é é é - rt re - pül - tel el ->
tö - le m, Ki - s ma - dár kám, Kis - na - da - r ká m ?

slightly sharp ↑

NOVELLO

(4)

Final

8:11 - 8:28

8:11 - 8:28

(feels sharp)

Gye-re he-za, Gye-re he-za

Kis-ma (warbeats) - dar kam

5

8:35 - 8:52

Handwritten musical score for the song "Gyere haza, Gyere haza, kismama-daróka, mada-daróka!". The score is written on two staves. The first staff contains the melody for the first line of the song, and the second staff contains the melody for the second line. The lyrics are written below the notes. The music is in a simple, folk-like style with a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a 2/4 time signature. The notes are mostly quarter and eighth notes, with some rests. The lyrics are written in a simple, handwritten font.

Gye - re ha - za, Gy - re he - za,
 kis - ma - da - ró - ka, ma - da - ró - ka!

Key to Notation

ELEGEIA (2013) by Nikos Stavropoulos & Anikó Tóth




Notes: Larger size indicates greater volume. Straight arrows indicate continuation.
Traditional notational elements include *crescendo* and *decrescendo*, *tacet*, accent.


LETTERS:

Á = bright (Texan "Hil")
Ó = dark (Lord)
Ú = dark, long oo (food)
Eh = (bed)
É = acute ey (German steht)
Ö = long ö (German höh)
Ng = (sing)
Ł = Russian L (tongue against hard palate)

C6, Eb5 = indicates pitch
A ↔ B = fluctuate between pitches
(EH-É-AH)3 = sing this sequence 3 times.
X = hit point (tape)
(0:10) = time indication

Graphic Symbols:

* = voiced gasp
 = sirening pitch
 = vocal fry
*  = suck teeth


 = shaking teeth

→? = going up in pitch, with question intonation

ugh! = guttural exhale

 = nasal port open snort (soft palate inhale/gasp)

 = mirolol-style vocal shake

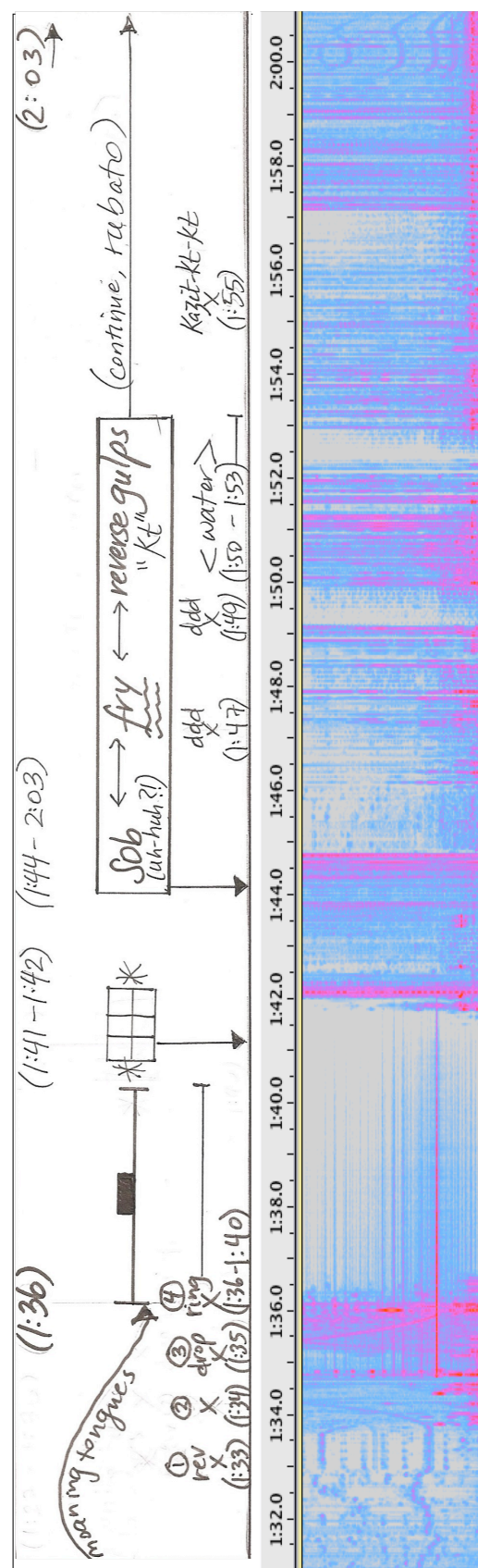
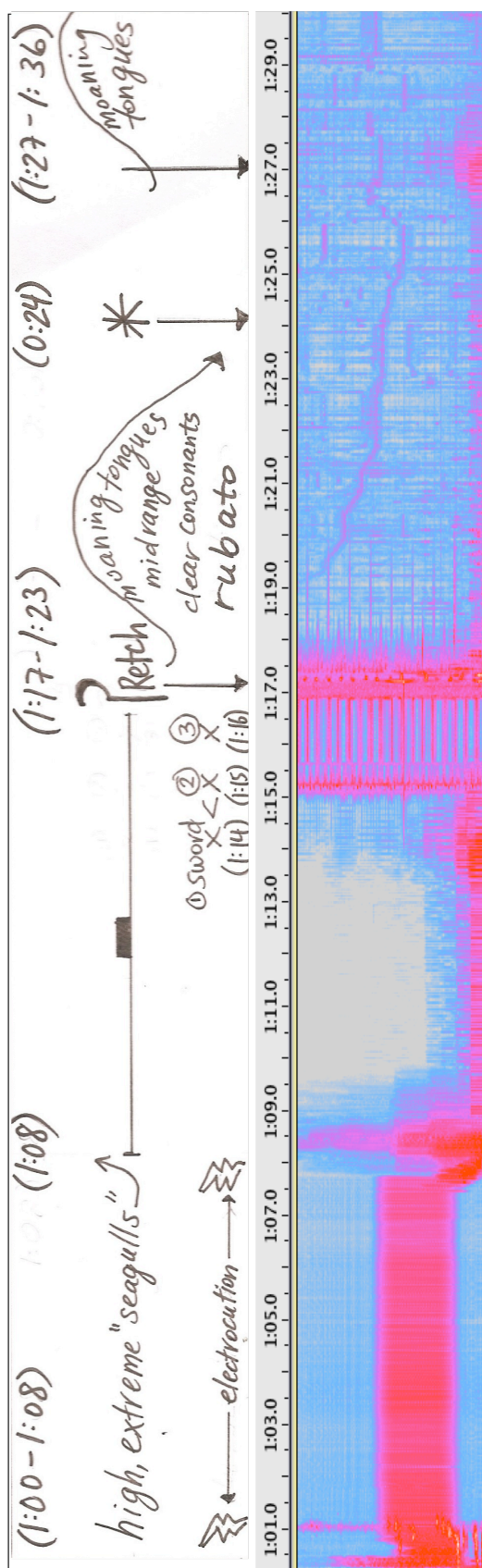
 = smile/wide mouth

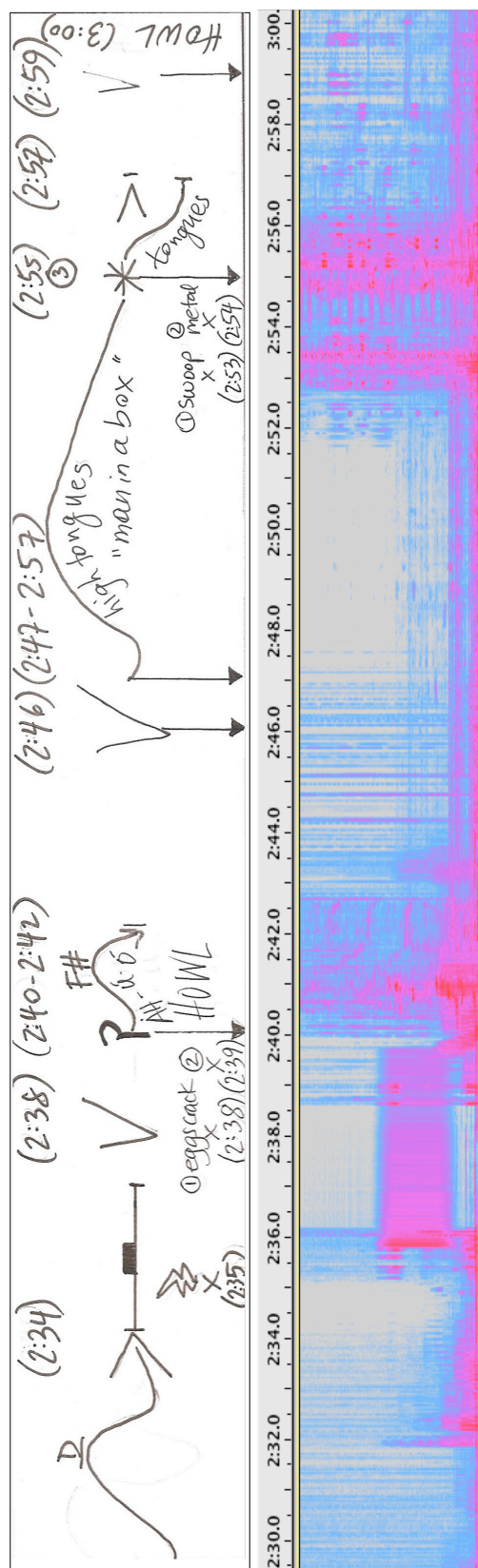
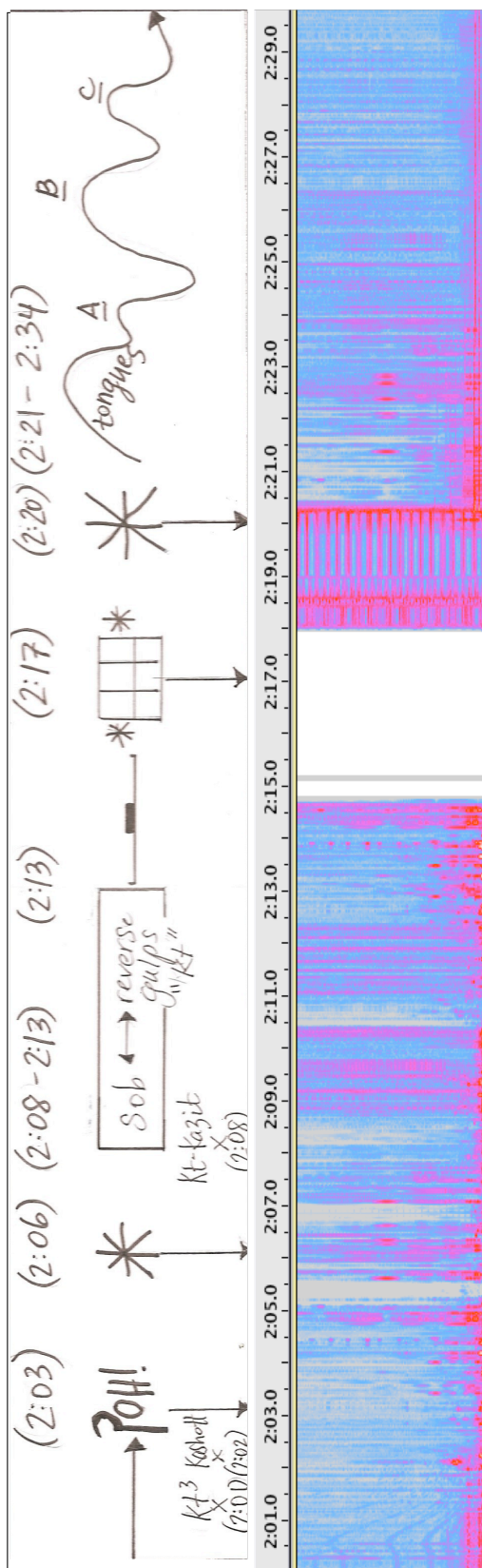
"tongues" = gibberish

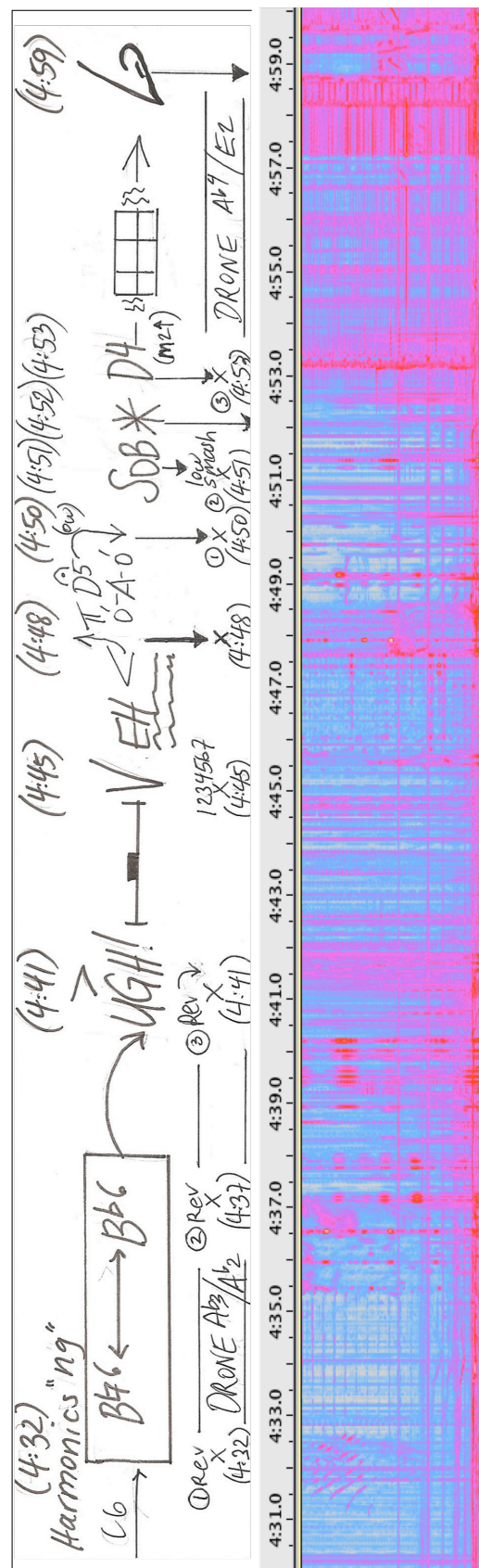
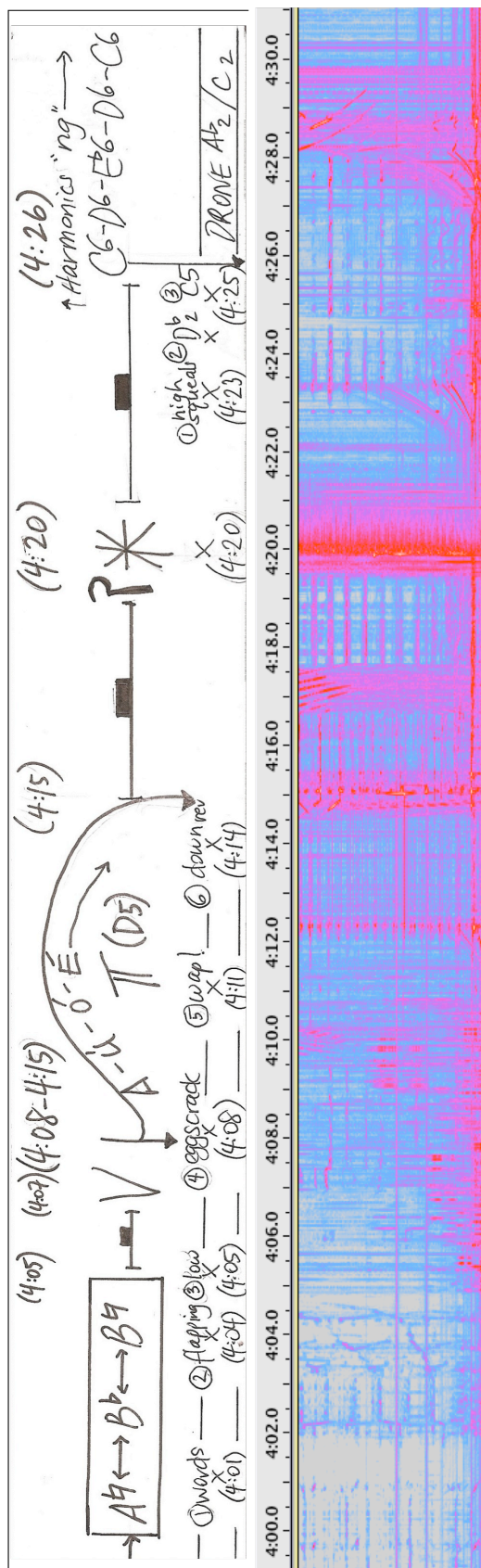
 = in-breath (usually in preparation for vocalisation)

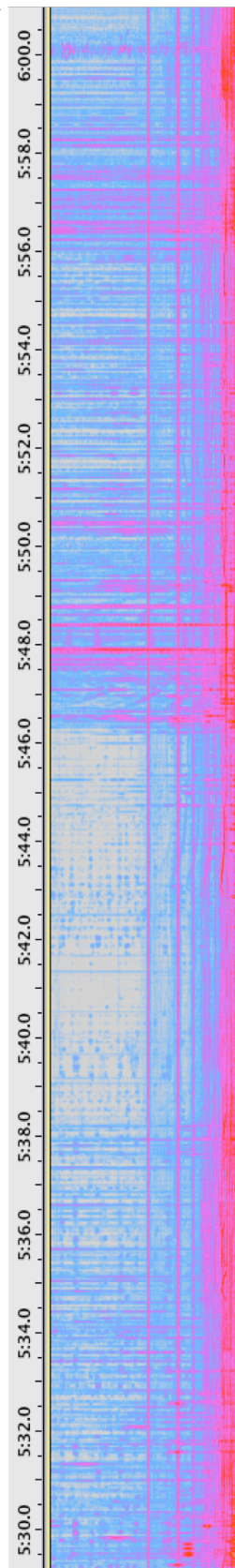
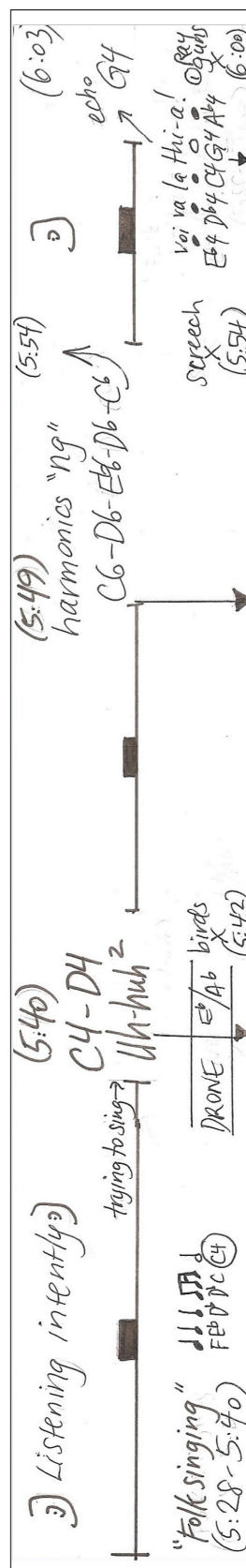
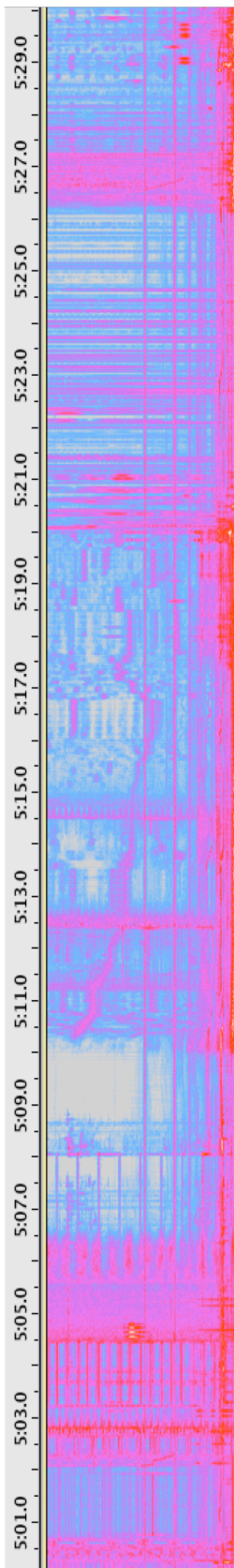
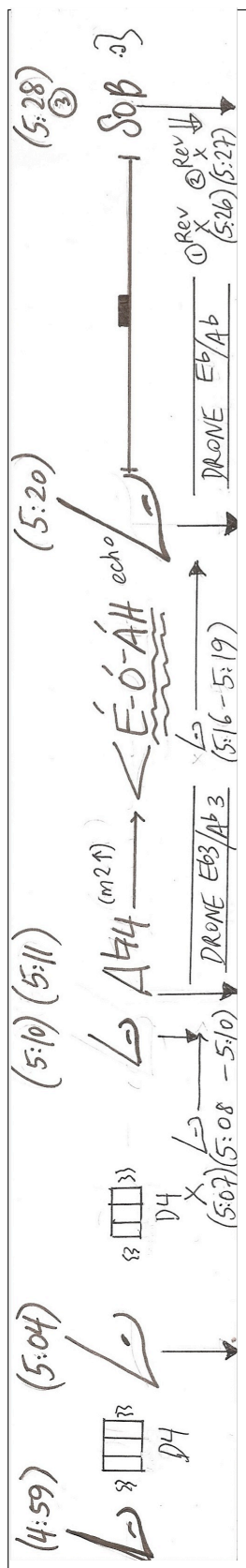
 = voiceless sob (engaged soft palate)

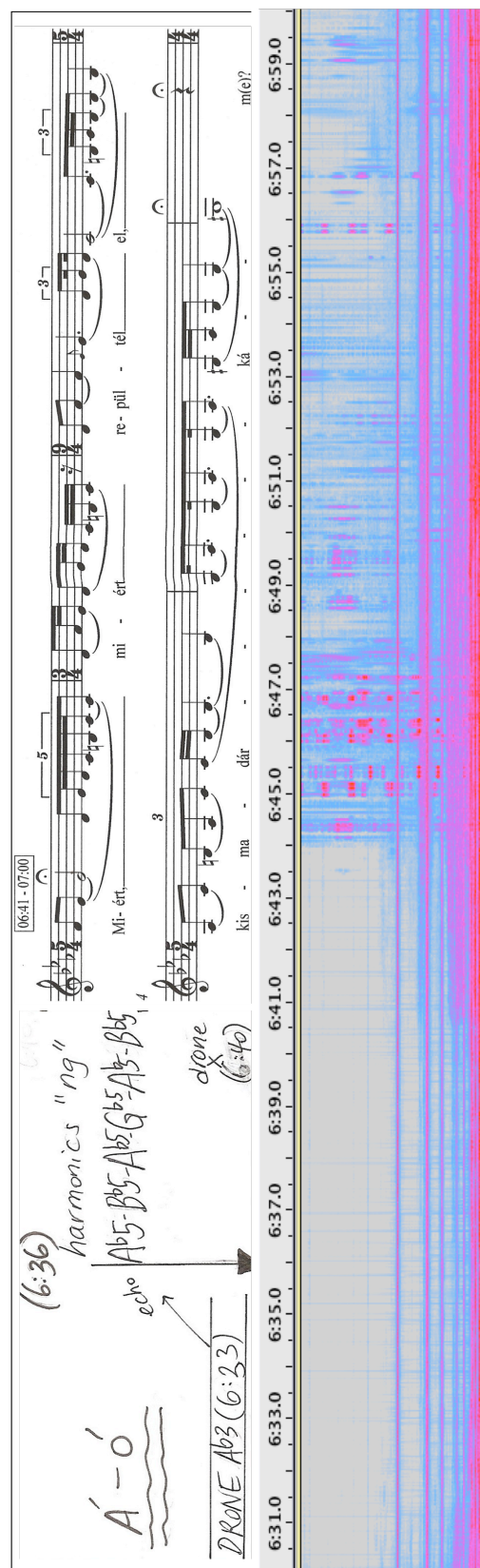
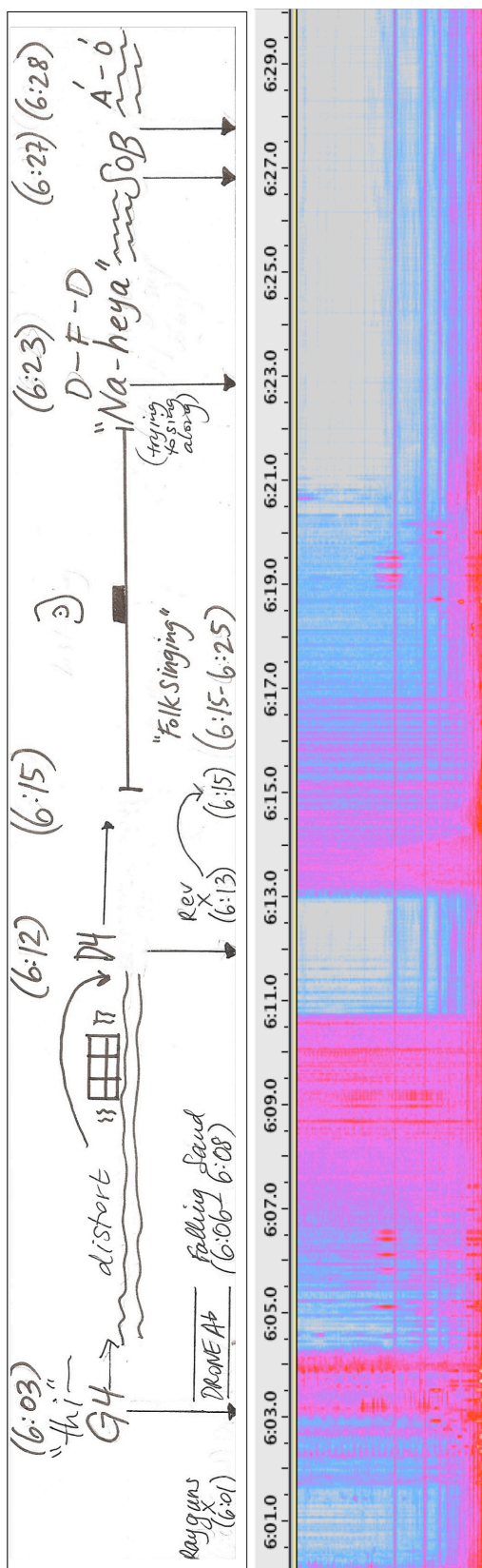
 = voiceless inbreath (engaged soft palate)











08:11 - 08:28 *on pitch*

17 Gye - re ha - za.

going sharp

5

08:29 - 08:46 *on pitch*


19 kis - ma - a - a - a - dár - kí á - á - ám!

accel. slightly sharp

3 5 3

rall.

21) 08:35 - 08:52 on pitch



Gye - re ha za, _____
Gye - re ha za, _____
kis - ma - dar - kám, kis ma dar - kám!
kis - ma - dar - kám, kis ma dar - kám!

(8:53-9:30)

D4 Ah! ↔ Ah? *less frequent*
back → howl *power down* *(8:55)*
(8:52)

12.15. Appendix 15. *ELEGEIA* Programme Notes

ELEGEIA (2013)

This live vocal and tape piece by Nikos Stavropoulos and Anikó Tóth was inspired by, and uses elements of, Greek *Moiroloi* (death lamentation) and folk traditions, as well as Hungarian lamentation singing. The work also utilises vocalisations that imitate and exaggerate the uncontrollable utterances that can occur during intense grieving.

The lyrical element, sung in Hungarian but derived from both traditions, relates to the mourning of lovers or children. It translates as, “Why have you flown away, my little bird? Come back home to me, my little bird!”

The piece is dedicated to Anna (Άννα), who left us on 14 June 2013.

12.16. Appendix 16. *to the wider ocean* programme - world premiere performance
Salford, UK, 2015

University of
Salford
MANCHESTER

Sonic Fusion Festival

Zoomusicology & Bio-acoustics

Thursday 19th—Sunday 22nd February 2015

Manchester Camerata

Saturday 21st Feb. 2015

Peel Hall

6:30pm—9:00pm



Twitter: @SONICFUSIONFEST, #SonicFusion

www.salford.ac.uk/sonicfusionfestival



Programme

Water Walk

John Cage

to the wider ocean
(world premiere)

Christine McCombe

Mary, Polly, Sukie, Jack and Jill
(world premiere)

Marc Yeats

Manchester Camerata

Manchester Camerata is one of the UK's leading chamber orchestras, renowned for dynamic performances, innovative collaborations and pioneering Learning and Participation work. Founded in 1972, the orchestra is home to some of the finest musicians in the world and uses music in innovative ways to redefine what an orchestra can do.



Gavin Wayte

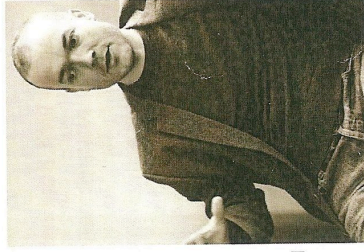
Gavin is a UK-based composer and conductor. He creates music for the concert hall and opera stage as well as for multi-media, site-specific performances. He is currently co-artistic director of Sounds Visible, a music and visuals collaboration with digital artist Joe Stathers-Tracey.

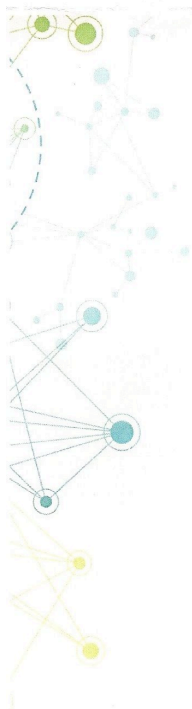
As a conductor he is particularly recognised for his performances of contemporary music to which he brings passion and flair as well as an intuitive understanding of the motivations of contemporary composers. He has conducted, among others, members of the BBC Philharmonic and Psappha and has broadcasted on Radio 3. He trained with Garry Walker and John Casken and in 2011 attended the Centre Acanthes conducting academy in Luxembourg under maestros Zsolt Nagy and Peter Eotvos.

His compositions have been performed at, among other places, The Royal Opera House Linbury Theatre; Teatro La Fenice, Venice; The Bridgewater Hall public spaces; BBC studios Media City UK and the New Music North West festivals.

His monodrama, *Metamorphosis*, was nominated for a British Composers award, vocal category, 2011, and *Hot to Trot Love Bot* for actor-harpichordist was nominated in the solo category, 2014. He has worked in artistic partnership with, among others, the BBC Philharmonic, Austrian Cultural Forum and the eu-art network. From 2011-13 he was curator of the BBC Philharmonic's Ink Still Wet pre-concert events series at Bridgewater Hall.

He was awarded a PhD in Composition from the University of Manchester in 2007, and is tutor in composition at Chetham's School of Music, and tutor in academic studies at the Royal Northern College of Music.

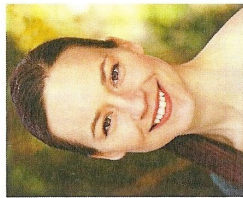




Anikó Tóth, Soprano

Formerly a Hungarian folk singer, Anikó expanded into Opera, Contemporary Classical, Jazz and Musical Theatre/Pop, currently also exploring Extended Vocal techniques. Anikó has performed in Los Angeles, Budapest, and the UK, including the Royal Albert Hall, Bridgewater Hall, and The Sage @ Gateshead. She has been broadcast on BBC Four, BBC Radio 3 & 4, PBS (USA), and Bartók Rádió (Hungary) with a variety of collaborators, including Meredith Monk, Tim Williams of Psappha Ensemble, Jan Kopinski, and the Hallé Choir. Anikó created the roles of *Ilona* and *Linda* in the opera *Flight Paths*, part of the 2012 cultural Olympiad, and has since worked with a variety of composers, including Nikos Stavropoulos and Stephen Klipatrick, to create new works exploring Female themes and characters. She is delighted to have worked with Christine McCombe to create *to the wider ocean* and with Marc Yeats in putting together *Mary, Polly, Sukie, Jack and Jill*.

www.anikototh.co.uk

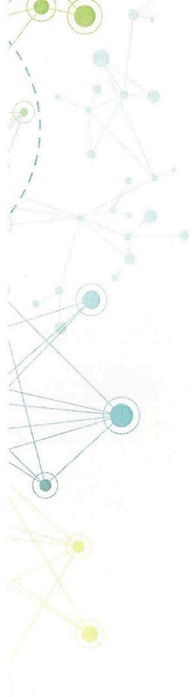


Christine McCombe

Christine McCombe is a composer, digital artist, writer and lecturer in sound and music composition. Her work has been commissioned, performed and recorded by leading ensembles and soloists, including the Vienna Piano Trio, Australian Chamber Choir and the Dunedin Consort. Her work has been featured at the Paris Rostrum (2002), and she is the recipient of a number of awards, including the Dorianne Le Gallienne Composition Award. She was selected for The Bundanon Trust Artist in Residence program in 2004. Christine has also written a number of papers dealing with the relationship between sound, space and image in digital hybrid works and edited a volume of *Contemporary Music Review* focussing on Australian cross media works: *Musical Hybrids - Sonic Intermedia in Australia* (2006).

to the wider ocean

Music – Christine McCombe
Video – Christine McCombe and Anikó Tóth
Text – Alison Croggon



Programme note

The piece, commissioned and performed by soprano Anikó Tóth, began as an exploration into the world of mother-daughter relationships and uses video, recorded audio and live vocals, and chamber ensemble to explore concepts such as memory, nurturing, and distance. The texts for the work are four poems by Australian writer Alison Croggon, exploring themes ranging from childhood, parental love, the sea and the strangeness of life's journeys. The video images are equally diverse, but the recurring theme of the sea binds the work together as a connecting thread and metaphor.

Marc Yeats

Marc Yeats' music is performed, commissioned and broadcast worldwide. Transduction, complex surface relationships, asynchronous alignments, contextual, harmonic and temporal ambiguities, polarised intensities and a visceral joy of sound are all primary concerns.

... 'how sour sweet music is,

When time is broke and no proportion kept!'

(*William Shakespeare: Richard II, 5.5.42-9*)

Marc Yeats is a composer and visual artist. His intense music has received performances and broadcast around the world including The Edinburgh String Quartet (UK), the Chamber Group of Scotland (UK), Psappha (UK), Richard Casey, Pierre-Arnaud Dablemont (FR) Geert Callaert (BE), the London Sinfonietta (UK), the Endymion Ensemble (UK), Lonba (Argentina), Paragon Ensemble (UK), the Scottish Chamber Orchestra (UK), illegal harmony (UK), 175 East (N.Z.), Sarah Watts, SCAW (UK), Sarah Nicolls, Federico Mondelci, the Commonwealth Sinfonietta (UK), Contempo Ensemble (Italy), Rarescale (UK), The Scottish Clarinet Quartet (UK), Symposia (UK), the New York Miniaturists Ensemble (US), Trio IAMA (Greece), The International Concert Brass Soloists (Switzerland), Dirk Amrein (Germany) Expatrio (UK), Chroma (UK), Kokoro (UK), Consortium5 (UK), Ensemble Amorpha (UK), Meridian Brass (UK), Szyzygy Ensemble (AU) Chamber Cartel (US) Carlton Vickers (US), the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra (UK), the Hallé Orchestra and Chorus (UK) conducted by Sir Mark Elder, Tokyo City Philharmonic (Japan) and Gewandhaus Radio Orchestra (Germany), with broadcasts on BBC Radio 3, BBC Radio Scotland as well as German, EU, Hawaiian, Japanese and New Zealand radio.

Marc is Composer-in-Association with Chamber Cartel (Atlanta US), Manchester Pride and SATSYMPH [UK] and is Chair of DIVAcontemporary, a Dorset based artist-led organisation working internationally, nationally and locally specialising in sound-art, music and installation.

Marc is proud to be a Sound and Music Composer Curator for the 2014/15 season.

www.marc-yeats.co.uk

12.17. Appendix 17. to the wider ocean song and video order, final
world premiere, Salford, UK, 2015

Order	Music Title	Video Title	Video, Live or both	TBC	approx timing
#1	*****	<i>Mothers and Daughters</i>	VIDEO ONLY (+ sound)	possibly with Aniko singing with video	02:08
#2	<i>Elegy</i>	NO VIDEO	Live Performance ONLY		04:50
#3	<i>Lamps</i>	Lamps video	VIDEO and Live Performance		05:30
#4	<i>Love Trips</i>	Love Trips (Rockpools)	VIDEO and Live Performance		04:00
#5	<i>To the Wider Ocean</i>	Glinting video	VIDEO and Live Performance		05:40
#6	*****	<i>Across the Water (Tul a vizen)</i>	VIDEO ONLY (+ sound)	possibly with Aniko singing with video	02:15
FILLER optional ***** Seascapes video VIDEO only (+ sound) filler, pre/post-concert? (5:47)					approx 26 minutes

12.18. Appendix 18. to the wider ocean song and video order, final
workshop performance, Salford, UK, 2014

Running Order	Running Time (approx)	video/audio	description	staging
#1	0 - 2:20	Mothers & Daughters / Lullaby txtr 2 (2:12)	video with audio, Aniko to sing with audio at c1:45	Anikó places objects around the stage/on platforms - white library seats (from basket). Cue video after first 2 *objects placed.
link	2:20 - 2:30	(0:10)	Anikó walks to mic and waits for end of vid (5" pause)	fade to black for 'For Ben'
#2	2:30 - 4:00	For Ben (1:30)	Spoken live, no video or audio	
link	4:00 - 4:05			(wait 5") lights up on objects
#3	4:05 - 8:45	Rock Pools / Love Trips (4:40)	Video with audio / Aniko sings with audio backing	wave sounds --> walk
link	8:45 - 9:45	(1:00)		Anikó walks to singing bowls and plays them a bit (1:00)
#4	9:45 - 15:32	Seascapes / Lamps (5:47)	Video with audio / Aniko sings with audio backing; Aniko to start c 0:45 - 1:00 (lamps vocal is about 4:20 long)	Db --> P4 down to Bb
link	15:32 - 16:02	Túi a vízen (0:30)	Anikó sings Túi a vízen	CUE next: after verse 1, lights fade down to objects
#5	16:02 - 18:17	Across the water / Túi a vízen (2:15)	Video with audio; ends with recorded Matyi singing alone	Anikó puts away objects, slow fade to black; Anikó goes off

***OBJECTS: (in order of placement)**

Ceramic mountain
wooden fish + shells
baby shoes
shell necklaces
2 singing bowls

**12.19. Appendix 19. *to the wider ocean* programme - workshop performance,
Salford, UK, 2014**

***to the wider ocean* (2014)**

by Christine McCombe, Australian composer and video artist, based on poetry by Australian poet Alison Croggon

The piece, commissioned and performed by soprano Anikó Tóth, began as an exploration into the world of mother-daughter relationships and uses video, recorded audio and live vocals to express complex emotions and to explore memory, nurturing, and distance. The work is in development, to be performed with live instrumentation in Autumn 2014.

Christine McCombe is a composer, digital artist, writer and lecturer in sound and music composition. Her work has been commissioned, performed and recorded by leading ensembles and soloists, including the Vienna Piano Trio, Australian Chamber Choir and the Dunedin Consort. Her work has been featured at the Paris Rostrum (2002), and she is the recipient of a number of awards, including the Dorienne Le Gallienne Composition Award. She was selected for The Bundanon Trust Artist in Residence program in 2004. Christine has also written a number of papers dealing with the relationship between sound, space and image in digital hybrid works and edited a volume of *Contemporary Music Review* focussing on Australian cross media works: *Musical Hybrids - Sonic Intermedia in Australia* (2006).

Anikó Tóth (Soprano) was raised singing Hungarian folk and choral music, and has since expanded into Classical, Contemporary Classical and Jazz; she is currently exploring extended vocal techniques. Trained in Los Angeles, at Hungary's Franz Liszt Music Academy and in the UK, she has performed in the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion (LA), the Millennium Theatre (Budapest), the Royal Albert Hall (London), the Bridgewater Hall (Manchester) and The Sage (Gateshead). Anikó created the roles of *Ilona* and *Linda* in contemporary opera *Flight Paths*, one of the curated strands of the 2012 Olympic celebrations. Performing with a variety of collaborators, from Meredith Monk to Jan Kopinski to Manchester's Hallé Choir, she has been broadcast on BBC Four, BBC Radio 3 & 4, PBS (USA), and Bartók Rádió (Hungary).

12.20. Appendix 20. Summarised Transcript of Interview with Christine McCombe
24 July 2014 - excerpt

Questions for Christine McCombe for our Skype interview regarding the collaborative process, moving forward in the piece, and the relevance of working collaboratively – 24 July 2014.

Answers paraphrased: Christine McCombe

Collaboration:

1. How did you decide on the range for each piece? Was it based on:
 - a. The recordings I sent?
 - b. The soprano/mezzo-soprano range generally?
 - c. Using your own voice to compose (and going by your own comfortable range)?
 - d. Choosing less height to maintain clarity of the poetry/text?

I listened to the recordings of the Hungarian folk lullabies and got an idea of your range or where your voice sounded good. Also, I always sing the melodies – I can't imagine why a composer wouldn't; it seems totally essential to me – of the pieces I'm composing. I have some students who write these ridiculous melodies and think, "Surely, you didn't bother to try those out on your own voice!"

Anikó: I can think of Beethoven's 'Ode to Joy' (9th Symphony), which is clearly written with the voice as an instrument, not taking in mind its limitations and the way it sounds and works best – sopranos are screeching at the top of their range, while other parts have massive leaps that don't make sense, as if being played on another (perhaps bowed?) instrument.

Also, I presume the middle range shows off the text better, which is an essential part of the entire piece.

Yes, good point. Also, I was thinking about the longevity of the piece and its ability to be performed by others. I thought, "Well, this is a range most people can sing," so I was also thinking about making it accessible for future performances by others.

3. Did you find working with me challenging/interesting, and why? (aside from Skype/technical and time difference difficulties)

Aside from these technical and time challenges, I didn't find it challenging. It felt like a very organic process, where we had meandering conversations that covered a wide range of topics. We then shared ideas and recordings back and forth, which gave me a clear idea of the pacing of the piece (as did watching the performance and the rehearsals on Skype and video).

I prefer to work collaboratively because I like bouncing ideas off others and getting ideas from them. It can be very lonely work composing on your own, so having a bit of interaction moves the process along in a more fulfilling and enriching way.

Also, with my teaching only one day a week at the University, I get in and then out as soon as I can – especially having kids, so I wouldn't probably have had the time to meet up with you, even if we were at the same university, if it hadn't been for Skype.

Anikó: Do you feel this has focused our time and conversations?

Yes. Normally, I'm not holed up in my little office for long periods having conversations, so this specified time has allowed for focused conversations; even though they meandered, we have been able to get the work done.

4. How is this collaborative process different from others you've undertaken in the past?

Well, I have never worked with anyone via Skype, so this has opened up a new world for me. I may get in touch with someone in Sweden and start a new collaboration!

5. Why do you think it is important to create works like this, collaboratively?

I prefer collaboration because it is enriching...

6. How relevant do you think it is that women artists work together, and why?

As I age, the more I lean towards sharing my personal experiences through my art/compositions, which I have found works really well in collaboration. In fact, your and my collaboration has been a very organic evolution. As women, we can discuss our shared experience.

Anikó: History (battles, big names, male experience, written word) versus Herstory (the intimate, the practical, raising kids in wartime, spoken experience, storytelling).

After I had my children, I struggled to decide whether to mention them – as a female composer, I thought, “Do I want to jeopardise my chances or credibility by seeming too ‘womanly’?” After a while, I realise that is a load of rubbish, and I just let myself be myself because, in the end, they are a part of my life and they had a massive influence on how I create work, topics I explore and my perspective/ viewpoint. I saw things differently and prioritised differently.

Anikó: To be fair, I don't necessarily think this is a purely feminine thing. E.g. our colleague Alan (Williams) talks about his kids all the time, and it's a regular topic of conversation. I think it really affects a huge change on any person's life to become a parent, and that experience shouldn't be negated or underestimated. It is important to look at things from the 'HUMAN' perspective, perhaps, and not relegate the importance of parenthood to the purely 'female' experience.

Yes, also, I think it is important to share women's stories in music because, especially in the very conservative art music circles, these were marginalised, which really bothered me. 20 or 30 years ago, I got together with female colleagues and we performed works by women composers. This was important. They were 'unearthed and celebrated', which was important at the time to gain acceptance. It would be lovely to think that women composers were just part of the composer's circle, rather than being called 'women' composers.

In essence, while they were celebrated, 'women's art and women's music' were marginalised and isolated as outside the normal sphere of composition (and experience). Now, it makes me very happy to see half or two thirds of a music programme occupied by women composers and NO MENTION IS MADE OF THIS. This shows that it's no longer an issue. It makes me very happy!

Perhaps it is okay to celebrate women's experience and art, but rather than as something 'other' than the 'mainstream' (traditionally male perspective), it can be viewed as one of the sides of the same coin, the human perspective and experience.

Well, it is strange to try to say that women's experience is outside of the mainstream, anyway, because we actually make up 51% of the population here in Australia, for example; so, to say that one is the main and the other is secondary is certainly a fallacy. (very paraphrased...)

Further, I have never collaborated with men on conceptual projects, for some reason, so I can't contrast/compare the two experiences! Perhaps I need to collaborate with a man.

Anikó: And I will interview you after the fact to get the perspective! There is something to be said about the way women communicate, that it's different from men – I feel like our conversations are like seasoning a soup that seems bitty and unrelated but that over time fleshes itself out becomes a stew with enough ingredients added (sometimes in no particular order!) over time. This may seem very different for a focus-driven conversation and seem unfocused from the outside perspective.

I hesitate to make gender generalisations, but there is something to be said about our different communication styles, that's true...

7. What did you find useful about our 25 March rehearsals in the DPL performance space for SSFF2014 (Salford Sonic Fusion Festival 2014)? What did you find frustrating/challenging?

Yes, it was frustrating to be limited to Skype when I'm used to being in a space and being able to get the full picture. It was better than nothing, though, and gave me a sense of the pacing of the work.

In future, I would look at getting a dramaturg/director/choreographer in to look at staging and the use of the space, especially – I'm happy to let someone else run with it once my composition is done!

8. Were the videos I made of the rehearsal useful in any way, and how?

Yes, the videos gave me another perspective, and, again, gave me an insight into the pacing of the piece as well as the order. It was also good for documentation.

Performance feedback:

9. What are your thoughts about the final outcome, the performance of 4 April 2014 (based on the rough video)?

c. What worked well?

d. What would you change?

i. Staging

As above, I would get someone in to advise on staging. I would keep it simple. There may be something a choreographer can suggest for drawing some of the strands together with particular gestures or movements. We had talked about you knitting on stage...

Anikó: ...And braiding my hair...

ii. Order

iii. Backing track

This will be fleshed out for real instruments anyway, so this will affect a lot of the piece (even in terms of staging). – We want to keep it simple, rather than cluttering up the

space and time with too many elements. With the live instruments and the two new pieces ('For Ben' and 'Elegy...'), which are both strong and visceral, this will fill the space in a different way. We don't want too much video or movement to clutter up the environment so that we lose the focus of the piece.

iv. Material

v. Pacing

It would be useful to get feedback from people who were in the space in April 2014, with regards to pacing. It was difficult to get a sense from the video.

11. Do you have any needs from me in terms of material/vocal recording/photographs, etc.? If yes, when do you need them by? (When do you need to finish the final draft by, regarding your other work?)

Not at the moment, but I'll let you know!

13. New Question regarding collaboration and text setting:

Libretto versus poetry. The difference? Why would you change a libretto, but not poetry? (with reference to Gavin Wayte's experience of a librettist who was offended that he changed a very minor word.)

I would never, never change Alison's poetry! Because she has honed it and shaped it in an intricate way. A libretto is different in that it must interact with the music; sometimes the librettist must give, sometimes the music must change to suit the libretto. However, Alison's poetry doesn't need my music. In fact, I should be honoured that she allows me to set it to music!

A libretto has a different, interdependent function, rather than being a stand-alone piece. That's why it's different.

12.21. Appendix 21. *Mary, Polly, Sukey, Jack and Jill* programme

World Premiere, Salford, UK, 2015

Marc Yeats

Marc Yeats' music is performed, commissioned and broadcast worldwide. Transduction, complex surface relationships, asynchronous alignments, contextual, harmonic and temporal ambiguities, polarised intensities and a visceral joy of sound are all primary concerns.

....'how sour sweet music is,

When time is broke and no proportion kept!'

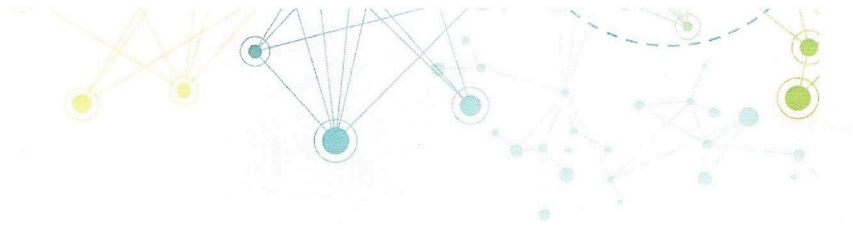
(William Shakespeare: *Richard II*, 5.5.42-9)

Marc Yeats is a composer and visual artist. His intense music has received performances and broadcast around the world including The Edinburgh String Quartet (UK), the Chamber Group of Scotland (UK), Psappha (UK), Richard Casey, Pierre-Arnaud Dablemont (FR) Geert Callaert (BE), the London Sinfonietta (UK), the Endymion Ensemble (UK), Lonba (Argentina), Paragon Ensemble (UK), the Scottish Chamber Orchestra (UK), illegal harmony (UK), 175 East (N.Z.), Sarah Watts, SCAW (UK), Sarah Nicolls, Federico Mondelci, the Commonwealth Sinfonietta (UK), Contempo Ensemble (Italy), Rarescale (UK), The Scottish Clarinet Quartet (UK), Symposia (UK), the New York Miniaturists Ensemble (US), Trio IAMA (Greece), The International Concert Brass Soloists (Switzerland), Dirk Amrein (Germany) Expatrio (UK), Chroma (UK), Kokoro (UK), Consortium5 (UK), Ensemble Amorpha (UK), Meridian Brass (UK), Syzygy Ensemble (AU) Chamber Cartel (US) Carlton Vickers (US), the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra (UK), the Hallé Orchestra and Chorus (UK) conducted by Sir Mark Elder, Tokyo City Philharmonic (Japan) and Gewandhaus Radio Orchestra (Germany), with broadcasts on BBC Radio 3, BBC Radio Scotland as well as German, EU, Hawaiian, Japanese and New Zealand radio.

Marc is Composer-in-Association with Chamber Cartel (Atlanta US), Manchester Pride and SATSYMPH [UK] and is Chair of DIVAcontemporary, a Dorset based artist-led organisation working internationally, nationally and locally specialising in sound-art, music and installation.

Marc is proud to be a Sound and Music Composer Curator for the 2014/15 season.

www.marc-yeats.co.uk



Mary, Polly, Sukie, Jack and Jill

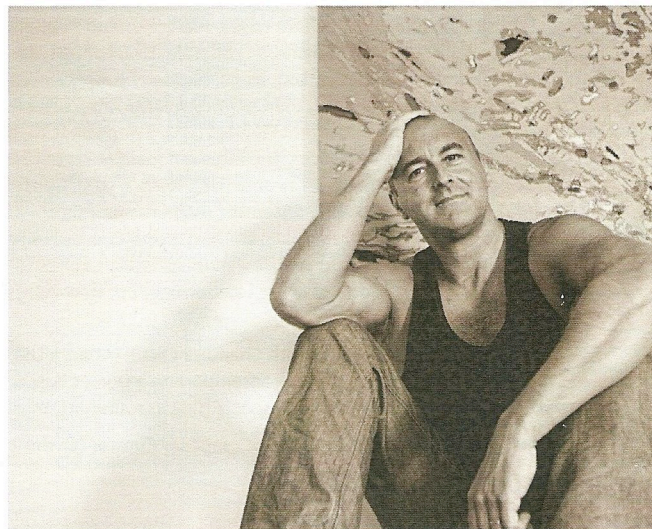
Programme note:

Mary, Polly, Sukie, Jack and Jill

In composing Mary, Polly, Sukey, Jack and Jill, I wanted to create the opportunity to set several traditional nursery rhymes to my own original music, and, more importantly, by setting these rhymes to music, completely alter the emotional world they were originally intended to inhabit. In so doing, I have tried to write a contiguous drama where musical links between each of the songs can be picked up in all the pieces, and, to a lesser extent, through the content of the text and the activities of the characters where an on-going nonsense drama is unfolding. Performed with sufficient effect (and costume), the songs can be performed and viewed as a piece of music theatre.

The texts remain largely true to their originals, although I have altered the order of some of the phrases and repetitions to suit my own purposes. In Jack and Jill, there's even the inclusion of lines from another 'rogue' nursery rhyme!

These are children's songs set for an adult audience, inhabiting a sometimes dark, turbulent, manic and scatty world. I had great fun writing them. I hope my sense of fun and mischief is conveyed through the music.



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Unknown Author. 'Anatomy of the larynx' image [Online] http://intranet.tdmu.edu.ua/data/kafedra/internal/anatomy/classes_stud/en/nurse/1/adn/ptn/1/13.%20NASAL%20CAVITY,%20LARYNX.files/image038.jpg, viewed 13 Dec 2015.

Ζήνδρος, Νίκος. (2009). Μοιρολόι Βαβούριον Θεσπρωτίας- κυρά Μαρίνα. (Miroloi) [Online] <http://youtu.be/Z5EqdCNhUWg>, viewed 31 Jan 2012.

Zogler74. (2009). *Santouri -Papadeas Marios - Αμανές Χιτζαζ - Mane hicaz* (σαντουρι-santour). (Amannes) [Online] <http://youtu.be/oNj14d1IWxA>, viewed 31 Jan 2012.

Performance

Pool (No Water). By Mark Ravenhill [with Frantic Assembly]. Directed by Scott Graham and Steven Hoggett. Contact Theatre. Manchester, UK. March 22, 2007.

Glossary of Vocal Terms

Amannes – (singular: **Aman**) Greek lamentation singing improvisations that grew out of the *Rebetika* tradition, they feature melismatic vocal treatment of the word, “Aman!”, meaning “Mercy!”. The vocal style used included, in some online examples I heard, an open nasal port and the use of the *makam Saba* scale.

bel canto – literally ‘beautiful singing’ in Italian. Phillips (2003) goes on to say the term “implies the use of smooth, open tones” and that “[t]his method... began early in the 18th century. Today, *bel canto* implies beautiful singing in a more classical style”.⁴⁹⁷

belter – a term used in musical theatre, meaning a singer who sings loudly in chest register (pop/speech quality).

choral singing technique – (p. 13 dissertation) by this, I mean a Classical sound but slightly covered (less resonant/twangy, as well as often using less volume) and using less vibrato in order to blend with other voices.

Chest

chest register/quality – the use of thicker vocal folds, as used in the speaking range or having a spoken quality, as well as a neutral larynx, in singing.⁴⁹⁸ As a soprano, my chest register is D3 (low for a soprano, I am told) to B3, though I can stretch it to E4 in Classical and in Pop, up to between A4 and C4 (depending on the day).

chest singing, resonant / folk singing style – (p. 14 dissertation) This refers to using the chest quality (thicker vocal folds as used in speech) and adding resonance or ‘twang’, which I have sometimes called ‘high larynx’ because of the feeling of raising. Indeed, Kayes (2004) says, “The setting for the larynx is high in twang...”.⁴⁹⁹ The very resonant tones at their more extreme end can be heard in *Voix Bulgaires*,⁵⁰⁰ as well as in Hungarian singing (e.g. Beatrix Tárnoki). See **twang**.

Classical / opera quality – is summed up succinctly by Kayes (2004), who says it is, “a mix of speech and twang but with a tilted thyroid [cartilage] and lowered larynx. The tilted thyroid

⁴⁹⁷ Phillips (2003), p. 273.

⁴⁹⁸ Kayes (2004), p. 157, called ‘speech quality’.

⁴⁹⁹ Kayes (2004): p. 162.

⁵⁰⁰ For example in: Antoniasorriso (Uploaded on July 29 2012). *Bulgarian Folklor – Kafal Sviri*. [Online] <https://youtu.be/hVqrW-fPOQ0>, viewed 6 Jan 2016.

[cartilage] reduces the vocal fold mass somewhat, and the lowered larynx balances the brightness of twang with some depth and ‘covering’”.⁵⁰¹

Potter (1998) goes on to give further detail on the ‘modern voice’, highlighting the tendency to lower the larynx in classical voice (however, seems to mix the lowering of the larynx with the singers’ formant, aka **twang**):

When a modern classical singer sings, a number of enhancements of [a hugely complex process of continually shifting frequencies involving also the lips, jaw and tongue] takes place, the principal one being the lowering of the larynx... , which significantly increases the length of the vocal tract. The effect of this is to shift downwards all the formant frequencies with a marked effect on the first formant, which is associated with the larynx and the initial production of vowel sounds. This phenomenon, known as the singers’ formant, produces additional resonance at the cost of no extra physical effort, to the extent that a solo singer can easily project his or her voice over a large orchestra.

The singers’ formant and the low larynx position are also responsible for the ‘coloration’, the dark richness, of the modern voice... The lower larynx position is facilitated by the lower jaw position characteristic of modern singers, or a wider mouth opening... Both of these movements further modify vowels relative to speech.⁵⁰²

Another element that comes into play, which is emphasised in classical vocal training, is the muscular engagement of the velum, or soft palate, in helping to make resonant tones (in addition to twang technique). This also helps with avoiding nasality.⁵⁰³ Some pedagogues suggest the soft palate lift can be accessed at the beginning of a yawn. Phillips (2003) also suggests snoring.⁵⁰⁴

cry/moan – According to Kayes (2004), cry “is characterised by a tilted larynx (the thyroid cartilage is tilted forward) and thin vocal folds. The larynx is in rest of high position, depending on the pitch... The sound is quiet, clear and somewhat rounded in quality. It will usually have vibrato”.⁵⁰⁵ It is close to a Classical set-up and is useful for what is known in musical theatre as ‘legit’ (short for ‘legitimate’) singing,⁵⁰⁶ such as what is required in Golden Age musicals, e.g. Shirley Jones’ rendition of ‘Many a New Day’ from *Oklahoma!*.⁵⁰⁷

⁵⁰¹ Kayes (2004), p. 158.

⁵⁰² Potter (1998), p. 53.

⁵⁰³ Phillips (2003), p. 81.

⁵⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 82.

⁵⁰⁵ Kayes (2004), p. 158.

⁵⁰⁶ Kayes (2004), p. 191.

⁵⁰⁷ As at (02:30-02:55) in BravoDivine (2008) *OKLAHOMA “Many a New Day” with lyrics*. <https://youtu.be/zHtLvFbWqoQ>, viewed 7 Jan 2016.

Extended Vocal Techniques – Kavasch (1980) describes these as “a sonic vocabulary [that] is developing in Western art music which includes and extends beyond traditional Western art music phonation, the basic voice production associated with opera and recital singing”. She goes on to say that:

Contemporary vocal writing includes sounds which previously were seldom or never heard in musical contexts. Some of these sounds or techniques occur in other musical cultures while others have arisen through the research and experimentation undertaken by certain contemporary vocalists.⁵⁰⁸

Kavasch’s paper discusses a small range of techniques used in her San Diego, California-based Extended Vocal Techniques Ensemble (EVTE), to include “reinforced harmonics”, “ululation”, “vocal fry”, “chant” and “complex multiphonics” – chosen for their ease of learning, most extensive use in the EVTE compositions, as well as being “basic techniques which can be applied to many sounds and/or from which distinctive variations can be produced”.⁵⁰⁹

false vocal folds – also called ‘vestibular folds’, they are located above the true vocal folds (where phonation occurs in the larynx). They are called ‘false’ because they normally are not used in phonation, except for **distortion**, **screaming vocals** (e.g. in **screamo**), as well as playing a role in some **bitonal** vocalisation, such as Tuvan **throat singing**.⁵¹⁰ “Their [main] function is to make a tight seal in the larynx to protect the airways”.⁵¹¹

gasps – gasps in *ELEGEIA* are semi-voiced, ingressive vocalisations with a neutral mouth, notated with an asterisk (*). By semi-voiced, I mean that the vocal folds are not entirely closed, giving a breathy sound. Generally, gasps are in higher ranges, making a ‘hehn?’ sound with an **open nasal port** and end with a question intonation, going up in pitch. An **open nasal port gasp** (also **ingressive**) where the soft palate/nasal port is engaged to make a rattling sound is notated as a nose shape. (See **Appendix 14. 12.14.9.** for the **key** (final score, p. 1).

gibberish – nonsense words that sound like language. I also called these ‘tongues’, referencing my religious upbringing referring to biblical figures ‘speaking in [strange] tongues’ when ‘filled with the Holy Spirit’. *ELEGEIA* gibberish felt personally more emotive when I thought of them as channelling something outside of myself, hence calling the gibberish I was speaking ‘tongues’. I also called it ‘low mumbling’ when the gibberish was spoken in a very low range at quiet volume, as if speaking to myself.

⁵⁰⁸ Kavasch (1980), no pagination.

⁵⁰⁹ Ibid.

⁵¹⁰ Fuks (1998).

⁵¹¹ Kayes (2004), p. 191.

gibberish, percussive – indicated in the score of *ELEGEIA* as “kt-kt-kazit-kt-kt”, percussive gibberish could be made **ingressively** and **egressively**, as well as purely with the tongue and mouth (unvoiced) or to include the larynx (voiced). It appears in a low range when voiced, as in ‘low mumbling’ gibberish.

glottal fry – see **vocal fry**.

glottis – the space between the two true vocal folds in the larynx. It remains open during breathing, but is covered by the vibrating vocal folds during phonation.⁵¹²

head-mix register – (p. 13 dissertation) – Phillips (2003) calls ‘mix’ the light chest as commonly used in high ranges by Barbra Streisand.⁵¹³ She calls ‘middle voice’ (p. 132) what I call the head-mix register. This, for me as a soprano, is anywhere from C4 (middle C, which has more chest tones), but certainly between F4 and F5.

open nasal port – (p. 27 dissertation). The nasal port, part of the soft palate, is the passageway between the pharynx (throat) and the nasal cavity (nose). It needs to be open to create nasal consonants such as ‘n, m, ng’ in English, but in *bel canto* and other types of singing is usually expected to be closed, so as to create a clear, oral (rather than nasal) singing tone. In overtone or harmonics singing, opening the nasal port can allow for an alternative source of resonance and filtration of tone to bring out harmonics/overtones, as can ‘twang’ quality (see **twang**).

Phonation

egressive phonation – creating a vocal sound on an out-breath, the usual way of speaking or singing.

ingressive phonation – Phonation simply means making a sound with the voice. Ingressive phonation is creating a vocal sound on an in-breath, instead on the common out-breath. This is considered an Extended Vocal Technique, as it does not appear in the usual canon of

⁵¹² Unknown Author. ‘Anatomy of the larynx’ image [Online]
http://intranet.tdmu.edu.ua/data/kafedra/internal/anatomy/classes_stud/en/nurse/1/adn/ptn/1/13.%20NASAL%20CAVITY,%20LARYNX.files/image038.jpg, viewed 13 Dec 2015.

⁵¹³ Phillips (2003), pp.156-157.

vocal pedagogy. A composer-performer who frequently uses ingressive phonation in her singing is Joan LaBarbara, for example in 'A Circular Song'.⁵¹⁴

pop technique – This can be made up of a range of the vocal qualities presented by Kayes (2004), but when I refer to it, I mean use of chest quality (called 'speech quality' by Kayes⁵¹⁵) up to the range of A4-C5 (see **chest quality**). In my performance as Linda in *Flight Paths*, I mix 'speech'/chest quality with 'cry'/tilt to bring volume, richness and anchoring to the sound, for example.

Rebetika - Greek urban folk-pop style from the mid-twentieth century, the Greek equivalent of singing the blues of socially excluded people in urban ghettos, developed in Greece from the early 1900s.⁵¹⁶ Themes explored city living and alienation and came from a personal perspective, rather than exploring themes from afar.⁵¹⁷ *Rebetika* singing seems to have been dominated by men, with the female singers going against traditional gender roles to perform in this style.⁵¹⁸ Indeed, the style called for a particular graveliness, or, as Vamvakaris calls it, " 'metal', an unsentimental toughness that suited the new style".⁵¹⁹ This vocal quality can be heard, for example, in Diamanda Galás' voice, for example.

reverse gulps – an approximation of the sound. In *ELEGEIA*, I created this sound using the tongue against the soft palate on an in-breath (see **ingressive phonation**), finishing with a tongue curl to make a sound like, "goyt, goyt?" with question intonation, indicated with "reverse gulps" and "kt" in the score (See (01:44-02:03) or p. 3 of score, **Appendix 14. 12.14.9.**). The emotional intention is to create a sound like uncontrolled sobbing.

rock distortion (vocal) – makes use of vocal fry and some engagement of the false vocal folds. An example of distortion can be heard in John Bon Jovi's vocals, for example, in 'Living on a Prayer'.⁵²⁰

⁵¹⁴ See (0:50-5:35) in Studium Generale Rietveld Academie (Published on Jan 30, 2015) *JOAN LA BARBARA: Circular Song, Solitary Journeys of the Mind and Windows*. 20-23 March, 2014. [Online] https://youtu.be/H_c3rLTqdY8, viewed 25 May 2015.

⁵¹⁵ Kayes (2004), p. 157.

⁵¹⁶ Holst-Warhaft (2003).

⁵¹⁷ Holst-Warhaft (2003), p. 185.

⁵¹⁸ Ibid. p.187.

⁵¹⁹ Kazantzakis (1965), p. 324-30 referenced in Holst-Warhaft (2003), p. 176.

⁵²⁰ BonJoviVEVO (Uploaded on Jun 16, 2009) *Bon Jovi - Livin' on a Prayer*, 1986. [Online] <https://youtu.be/IDK9Qqlzhwk>, viewed 13 Dec 2015.

screaming vocals – according to Melissa Cross’s *Zen of Screaming 2*,⁵²¹ there are three types of safe screaming Extended Vocal Techniques for use in music such as screamo and death metal: “fry”, “false cord” and “death”.⁵²² I have used the “fry”, which engages the vocal fry of the true vocal folds, as well as the “false cord”, which seems to engage the vestibular or false vocal folds just above the true vocal folds. The technique or anatomical elements used in “death” screaming go beyond the scope of this document and my practice. Further information can be gathered from Cross’s work.

Screamo – a 1990s style of music which came out of hardcore, according to *AllMusic.com*, which goes on to say, “... singers who alternate between passionate singing and distraught shrieking... characterizes (sic) most screamo. These vocals are often layered or appear side-by-side amid aggressive, hard-hitting guitar licks used to trigger an exhaustive, emotional catharsis”.⁵²³

‘seagulls’ / high screaming – see **whistle register**.

siren/glissando – vocalisation that imitates “a police or ambulance siren”, going through the range of the voice in a sweeping arc, up and down in pitch. It can be used to develop flexibility in the larynx, increasing range and awareness.⁵²⁴ In *ELEGEIA*, co-composer Stavropoulos preferred the term *glissandi* to ‘sirens’.

shaking teeth – called “dental tremolo (or jaw quivering)” in the key to Berio’s score of *Sequenza III* (1968),⁵²⁵ this involves vocalising whilst shaking the jaw.

sob quality – (p. 22 dissertation). Kayes (2004) calls this a variation on ‘cry’ quality, calling ‘sob’ “dark, quiet and intense”, featuring a lowered larynx, in contrast with the ‘cry’ quality’s neutral tilted larynx.⁵²⁶ She continues, saying, “Sob is made with thin folds, a tilted thyroid and a lowered larynx... [It] is used to produce depth of tone in some styles of classical singing”.⁵²⁷

⁵²¹ Cross, Melissa (2007) *The Zen of Screaming 2 Trailer!! New DVD!!* [Online] <https://youtu.be/spZWQwxNKHg>, viewed 13 Dec 2015.

⁵²² Ibid. (0:12-1:03).

⁵²³ Allmusic.com ‘Explore Music: Screamo’. [Online] <https://web.archive.org/web/20101017103638/http://www.allmusic.com/explore/style/screamo-d13459>, viewed 13 Dec 2015.

⁵²⁴ Kayes (2004), p. 192.

⁵²⁵ Berio (1968), second page of English key (no pagination).

⁵²⁶ Kayes (2004), p. 158.

⁵²⁷ Kayes (2004), p. 162.

speech quality – (p. 22 dissertation). This vocal sound is achieved mainly in the lower, or chest range, according to Kayes, and “is characterised by thick vocal folds and a neutral larynx position... The sound is ‘thick’, ‘intense’, ‘heavy’, and projects well”.⁵²⁸ (See **chest quality**.)

Sprechgesang – Griffiths (2007-2015) defines this as “A type of vocal enunciation... between speech and song”. He highlights that the differentiation between *Sprechgesang* and *Sprechstimme* “is problematic, partly because the pitch range of speaking voices is narrow, partly because there is no clear middle point between speech and song but rather a haze of alternatives”.⁵²⁹ The *Grove Dictionary Online* says, “In general usage, *Sprechgesang* is the term for the vocal technique, *Sprechstimme* for the v. - part employing it. A well - known example of *Sprechgesang* is that of Rex Harrison... as Prof. Higgins in *My Fair Lady*”.⁵³⁰ In the score for *Green Angel*, composer Lauren Redhead sometimes uses this term interchangeably with the term ‘psalm singing’, which she notates without indication of rhythm, only pitch.

Sprechstimme - seemingly used almost interchangeably with *Sprechgesang* in Grove Dictionary online,⁵³¹ is a term coined by Arnold Schoenberg to describe the vocal effect he wanted for his 1912 piece *Pierrot Lunaire*. In the foreword to the piece, Schoenberg says, “The melody given in notation (with very specially indicated exceptions) is *not* intended to be sung”.⁵³² He goes on to describe how the performer is to achieve a “speech melody”, indicating that rhythmic precision is required, as well as initial adherence to specified pitches, but that, rather than sustaining these pitches, the singer should “immediately abandon... it by falling or rising”, never calling to mind singing itself.⁵³³

tessitura – range of the voice “where a singer should be most comfortable”, or “the area where most of the notes lie in [a] song”.⁵³⁴ For example, the *tessitura* of a song written for the soprano voice usually lies within the range of C4 (middle C) and C6 (high C), in contrast with the mezzo-soprano range, which is usually written in the range of A3 (A below middle C) to A5 (A below high C).

⁵²⁸ Kayes (2004), p. 157.

⁵²⁹ Griffiths (2007-2015) on *Sprechgesang*.

⁵³⁰ ‘Sprechgesang, Sprechstimme’. *The Oxford Dictionary of Music*, 2nd ed. rev. *Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press. [Online] <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/opr/t237/e9716>, accessed January 12, 2016.

⁵³¹ Griffiths (2007-2015) on *Sprechgesang*. Griffiths and Salzman (2002), p. 36 use the term *Sprechstimme* in reference to *Pierrot Lunaire*.

⁵³² Schoenberg (1994), p. 54.

⁵³³ Ibid.

⁵³⁴ Phillips (2003), p. 61.

throat singing – also known as harmonics, overtone, and bitonal singing, this style refers to vocalising on a single note (using the vocal folds), known as the fundamental tone/note, and then using various parts of the vocal anatomy to filter the tone to bring out individual harmonics / partials within the harmonic series in the fundamental tone. The effect is of a ‘whistle-like’ tone or melody that is heard above the fundamental, creating two tones from one voice (hence ‘bitonal’).

tilt – refers to a tilted posture of the cartilages of the larynx, bringing out different vocal qualities. Kayes (2004) describes the laryngeal postural set-up for opera/Classical quality, which includes a ‘tilted thyroid cartilage’⁵³⁵ (to create what Estill calls the ‘cry/sob/moan’ quality) with a lowered larynx:

The deeper tones of a lowered larynx are preferred by some schools of teaching and are desirable as part of the set-up for the operatic voice. However, this is an aesthetic consideration, not one of vocal health... Tilting the larynx has various uses. You will generally find it easier to negotiate your first main gear change⁵³⁶ by engaging thyroid tilt. This posture is... used in classical and ‘legit’ singing.⁵³⁷

(For ‘legit’ singing, see **cry/moan**.) This laryngeal position also brings out natural vibrato.⁵³⁸ Using ‘tilt’ (in this case, that of the thyroid cartilage) in the speaking voice brings out a ‘warm’ or ‘friendly’ tone (though Kayes deems it “fake”-sounding!)⁵³⁹ and can be heard in American commercials, for example.

triple threat – a term used in Musical Theatre to refer to a performer who is equally skilled in singing, acting and dance.

twang quality – Kayes (2004) refers to ‘twang’ as ‘the singer’s formant’,⁵⁴⁰ which is used in Classical terminology to describe the bright sound in operatic singing that cuts over the orchestra, for example. From various teachers and choral directors, I have also heard it called “blade”, “spin”, “ping”, “ring-ping”, “harmonics”, “projection”, “edginess”, and “squillo”⁵⁴¹; it helps with projection:

⁵³⁵ Kayes (2004), p. 158. Kayes also mentions the use of the tilted cricoid cartilage for pop vocal qualities, such as ‘belt’ (p. 25). When I use the term ‘tilt’, I am referring to the Classical set-up.

⁵³⁶ The ‘gear change’ to which Kayes refers is traditionally called the ‘*passaggio*’ in Classical terminology.

⁵³⁷ Kayes (2004), pp. 24-25.

⁵³⁸ Kayes (2004), p. 158.

⁵³⁹ Kayes (2004), p. 162.

⁵⁴⁰ Ibid, p. 110. (See all of Chapter 9.)

⁵⁴¹ Lombard & Steinhauer (2005), p. 295.

Twang quality is characterised by a tightened aryepiglottic sphincter with high larynx and tongue. The thyroid can be tilted or neutral, allowing for a thinner or thicker vocal fold mass. The tightening of the aryepiglottis tends to increase resistance in the vocal folds, so it is important not to drive breath in this voice quality. Twang can also be nasal or oral. Twang is edgy, brilliant and piercing and it can be added to other qualities to introduce the ‘singer’s formant’ for ease of projection across the range.⁵⁴²

Lombard and Steinhauer (2005) describe it thus:

Twang is the bright, brassy, ringing voice quality commonly heard in country-western singing, witch cackling, a child’s “nya, nya” taunt, and is equated often with duck quacking.⁵⁴³

They quote Sundberg (1987) in describing the formants that are emphasised during the use of this technique:

The acoustic outcome of narrowing [the] laryngeal vestibule [of the aryepiglottic sphincter] is a clustering of the third, fourth, and fifth formants resulting in a higher amplitude of all vowel spectra in the vicinity of 3.0 kHz.⁵⁴⁴

This filtering, they say, “corresponds with the resonant frequency of the external auditory meatus”, which is why “fundamental frequencies below 1.0 kHz receive a boost of 15-20 dB in sound transmitted to the middle ear without an increase in vocal effort by the speaker”.⁵⁴⁵

ugh! / retch – these are created similarly. The **ugh!** is an **eggressive** gasp, which begins with a glottal stop (closing of the **glottis**, as in ‘uh-oh!’), which is forced open with air pressure onto a semi-voiced (breathy) tone to make the sound ‘ugh!’, which is how it is written in the *ELEGEIA* score. The **retch** sound is created similarly, but with greater sub-glottal pressure, hence its notation with the IPA symbol for the glottal stop ʔ and the word ‘retch’ = ʔRETCH. (The capitals and size of the written notation indicate a louder volume.) Additionally, the **false vocal folds** are engaged.

ululation – defined by Wishart (1996) as fast glottal fluctuations.⁵⁴⁶ In the case of *Mirololoi*, on a falsetto voice at high registers. Ululation (tremolo) at high registers is what I called ‘mirololoi’ in the score,⁵⁴⁷ represented by the wavy single line rising in pitch (See **Appendix 14**).

⁵⁴² Kayes (2004), p. 158.

⁵⁴³ Lombard & Steinhauer (2005), p. 295.

⁵⁴⁴ Sundberg (1987) quoted in Lombard & Steinhauer (2005), p. 295.

⁵⁴⁵ Yanagisawa, Eiji, Jo Estill, Steven T. Kmucha, Steven B. Leder (1989) referenced in Lombard & Steinhauer (2005), p. 295.

⁵⁴⁶ Wishart (1996), p. 274.

⁵⁴⁷ See **Appendix 14. 12.14.9.** for *mirololoi* in the score, p. 1 in the key, and in context, p. 5 at 3:22-3:31.

12.14.9. for key and score to *ELEGEIA*). Examples of *Miroloi* singing can be heard online - in a real death vigil, see Aldimitris (2009),⁵⁴⁸ in performance, see ALLIOHTHI (2009).⁵⁴⁹

vocal fry – also known as ‘glottal fry’. Wishart (1996) refers to this as ‘glottal clicks’, indicating the way the vocal folds ‘click’ together to close the glottis.⁵⁵⁰ When giving direction on using speech quality in singing, Kayes (2004) refers to the vocal fry as a ‘gentle creak’:

[S]iren [downwards on the voice] and deliberately ‘let go’ as you approach the bottom of your range. Before you arrive at your bottom note, allow your voice to relax into a gentle creak, imitating the sound of a creaky door. The feel needs to be very laid back and lazy. This will release any thyroid tilt.⁵⁵¹

The sound can also be heard in pop vocals, such as throughout Britney Spears’ performance of ‘Oops! I Did It Again’,⁵⁵² especially at the onset of phrases.

Cleall (1994) explains the anatomical movements here: “If low notes below the range of chest voice are attempted with a raised larynx and lowered epiglottis, a rough, squeezed tone not unlike the death-rattle is heard... It has no musical value”.⁵⁵³ (!)

The sound quality can be filtered using various vocal anatomy e.g. open versus closed nasal port, tilted versus raised larynx, as well as using the lips and tongue to change vowel shapes, for example. This was explored in *ELEGEIA* (despite it being “of no musical value”!).

whistle register – (as used in *ELEGEIA*) the highest vocal register (created by the vocal folds), so called because of its similarity to a whistling sound. I use this register to create the ‘seagull’ sounds as well as the C6-D6-Eb6 phrases in *ELEGEIA*.⁵⁵⁴ Also known as “flute register, bell register, flageolet”⁵⁵⁵ it is used by Classical and popular singers alike. For

⁵⁴⁸ Aldimitris. (2009). Μανιάτικο μοιρολόι. [Online]

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TJxqC4fiqCM&feature=related>, viewed 31 Jan 2012.

⁵⁴⁹ ALLIOHTHI. (2009). ΜΟΙΡΟΛΟΙ ΣΤΟ ΠΟΛΥΦΩΝΙΚΟ ΚΑΡΑΒΑΝΙ / ΦΩΤΑΨΙΕΣ ΤΗΣ ΑΛΛΗΣ ΟΧΘΗΣ. [Online] <http://youtu.be/y3EYZtfopzg>, viewed 31 Jan 2012 and 3 Sept 2013.

⁵⁵⁰ Wishart (1996), p. 268.

⁵⁵¹ Kayes 2004, p. 158.

⁵⁵² BritneySpearsVEVO (Uploaded Oct 25, 2009) *Britney Spears ‘Oops! I Did It Again’* (Official Video). [Online] <https://youtu.be/CduA0TULnow>, viewed 2 Dec 2015.

⁵⁵³ Cleall (1994), p. 453.

⁵⁵⁴ e.g. at 04:48-05:00 of *ELEGEIA*, **Appendix 1. Audio 12.**

⁵⁵⁵ Phillips (2003), p. 158.

example, Mariah Carey used it in her first recordings,^{556 557} and it can be used classically in Mozart's Queen of the Night aria⁵⁵⁸ in *Die Zauberflöte*.⁵⁵⁹

zombie moaning (guttural) – I use this term once in the score for *ELEGEIA*, referring to a dramatic turning point.⁵⁶⁰ This voiced sound is created with a lowered larynx, with engaged false vocal folds to create distortion.

⁵⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁷ Best heard at (02:46-03:00) in Salvador, Anthony (2010) *Mariah Carey's Whistle Collection*. [Online] <https://youtu.be/JF6hEhJwhxk>, viewed 7 Jan 2016.

⁵⁵⁸ As at (03:00-03:03) in del Carmen y Gonzalez, Jose Manuel (2010) *Diana Damrau & Mozart – the Queen of the Night aria*. [Online] <https://youtu.be/463jDvbw3LQ>, last viewed 9 Jan 2016.

⁵⁵⁹ Coffin (1960).

⁵⁶⁰ See **Appendix 14. 12.14.9.**, at 03:15-03:17 in the score, p. 5.

List of Figures

	Page
1. <i>Green Angel</i> score key for Voices, vocal qualities.	63
2. 'Psalm singing' with indeterminate rhythm left to the performer's interpretation, (score, p. 21).	64
3. "Sung" versus " <i>Sprechgesang</i> (psalm singing)" notation (score, p. 24).	65
4. <i>Green Angel</i> score, p. 30 showing vocal technique changes, which I highlighted for quick reference.	66
5. <i>Green Angel</i> score, p. 38 with coloured text highlighting vocal technique changes.	67
6. <i>Green Angel</i> score, p. 35 showing high <i>tessitura</i> with vocal quality directions from the composer written in by the performer.	68
7. <i>Green Angel</i> score, p. 79 shows midrange singing with less rapid shifting between vocal styles.	69
8. <i>Green Angel</i> score, p. 85 shows midrange singing with fewer rapid shifts between vocal styles.	70
9. Linda's puffin song, <i>Flight Paths</i> score, with stage direction to "strut". Also visible is my interpretation of Doncastrian vowel pronunciation of Linda's text, below.	82
10. Ilona's melody at bars 474-481 references Hungarian folk-song 'Repülj, madár, repülj'.	90
11. Ilona's folk-like melody at her entrance in <i>Flight Paths</i> .	91-92
12. Ilona's soaring vocal line harmonises with the pentatonic tune of the children's choir, bringing out her folk connection as well as her connection to the birds.	94
13. Ilona's pentatonic Flamborough diving aria.	95
14. Original operatic setting of Erin's 'When I Was a Little Girl' aria.	96
15. The score of Erin's 'Caravan Song' shows its lower <i>tessitura</i> , which allowed for clarity of speech.	97
16. Erin takes on Ilona's love for nature in the 'Farm Birds' reprise. The word setting at the end has been changed to "Ah!" upon request by singer, Nadine Benjamin (formerly Mortimer-Smith).	98
17. My transcription of Hungarian folk song 'Túl a vízen zörög a jég' as I sing it, using folk melismas and ornamentation inspired by singers of the folk tradition.	108

	Page
18. The decorations in the cimbalom part at bars 33-35 mirror the vocal line above, bars 27-31.	110
19. The darkness hides our wild ride. "WILD RIDE" is on a high A (A5).	111
20. NIGHT BRIDE is on F5, Gb5, bar 70-71.	112
21. Initial setting of the text at bar 115.	113
22. Putting "of" in the anacrusis helped emphasise main words "wonder" and "joy", bars 115-117.	113
23. Initial setting of the text at bar 107.	113
24. My addition of "all" at bar 107 removed the emphasis on "the", bringing the phrase closer to natural speech, without losing the musical line.	113
25. The melody from bars 45-47 that I suggested for underlay of spoken text in <i>The Night Bride</i> 's fixed medium.	115
26. David Kennedy's character study of <i>Anna</i> from <i>The Night Bride</i> .	118
27. The makam Saba (scale).	129
28. The composer's use of accents and crescendo, as well as rhythm, indicated the character of a finger-wagging, pedantic child.	163
29. The composer's use of word painting, accents and <i>subito crescendo</i> , as well as rhythmic simplicity against a complex underscoring, indicated a finger-wagging pedantic child.	163
30. The composer's use of wide vocal leaps, accents and large dynamic shifts in short phrases gave a sense of calling across wide distances and required a legato vocal line. ('Baa, Baa, Black Sheep')	164
31. The composer's use of <i>molto staccato</i> and <i>molto animato</i> indications, accents, and word setting that breaks up the vocal line, for example, on the word "bags", show a marked character shift.	164
32. The composer's indication of a slightly whispered vocal line indicated an 'excited schoolgirl' character and contrasting vocal line to the lyrical vocal style that precedes it.	165
33. <i>Fortissimo</i> in the vocal line at bar 222 indicates intense emotion, such as excitement or panic, while the final four bars evoke tiptoeing.	166
34. The slow tempo marking and sustained strings indicate stasis in 'Oh, Dear, What Can the Matter Be?'.	168
35. My marking of the score to bring out the 'womanly' Victim archetype, in contrast with the <i>semplice</i> voice used for the childlike persona.	170
36. The orchestral underlay indicates a stomping, teenage Rebel archetype.	171

	Page
37.a., b., c. - The variety of vocal characterisations I marked in my score.	172-173
38. The <i>forte</i> marking at the beginning with the stuttering rhythm and dynamic orchestral underlay give a sense of quiet panic, which I labeled 'hysterical'.	174
39. Panic sets in, with crescendo from the composer and a non-vibrato vocal tone from the performer.	175
40. This phrase culminates in a word painting scream, as Bo Peep begins to lose control.	175
41. Bo Peep's final descent into hysterical screams with leaps of tenths, using the break between high and chest range.	176

List of Images

	Page
1. The Old Woman gives Ash some birdseed. With mezzo soprano Katherine Jarvis. (<i>Green Angel</i>). Photo by Malcolm Johnson, 2011.	61
2. Anikó Tóth as Linda in <i>Flight Paths</i> . Photo by Malcolm Johnson, 2011.	79
3. Ilona saves Erin from the waves. (<i>Flight Paths</i>). Photo by Malcolm Johnson, 2011.	87
4. Anna wields the Rider's sword. "Roar!" 2012 world premiere with Tim Williams on cimbalom. (<i>The Night Bride</i>). Video screenshot.	106
5. In costume as <i>Anna</i> at the world premiere in Vienna, with Tim Williams of Psappha Ensemble (cimbalom). (<i>The Night Bride</i>). Photo by Stephen Kilpatrick, 2012.	119
6. The composer Marc Yeats' serving suggestion from the score, left up to the performer's interpretation, p. 5. (<i>Mary, Polly, Sukey, Jack and Jill</i>)	159
7. Little Bo Peep costume, following the composer's "serving suggestion". (<i>Mary, Polly, Sukey, Jack and Jill</i>). Photo by Nick Harrison, 2015.	161